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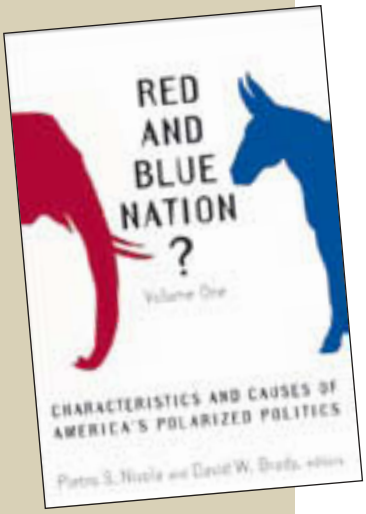
Critical Readings from Hoover Institution Fellows



Red and Blue Nation?

Characteristics and Causes of America's Polarized Politics

EDITED BY PIETRO S. NIVOLA AND DAVID W. BRADY

Analysts and pundits increasingly perceive a widening gulf between "red states" and "blue states." Yet the research to support that perception is scattered and sometimes difficult to parse. America's polarized politics, it is said, poses fundamental dangers for democratic and accountable government. Heightened partisanship is thought to degrade deliberation in Congress and threaten the integrity of other institutions, from the courts to the media. But how deep do the country's political divisions actually run? Are they truly wreaking havoc on the social fabric? Has America become a house divided? This important new book, *Red and Blue Nation?* gets to the bottom of this perplexing issue.

The first of two volumes cosponsored by Brookings and the Hoover Institution carefully considers the extent to which polarized views among political leaders and activists are reflected in the population at large.

In *Red and Blue Nation?* leading journalists and scholars combine their different insights to enrich our understanding of the issue, offering thoughtful analyses of the underlying problems. This comprehensive and accessible discussion of the polarization debate will be an essential resource for policymakers, scholars, and anyone interested in the health of American public discourse.

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White Guilt

How Blacks and Whites Together Destroyed the Promise of the Civil Rights Era

SHELBY STEELE

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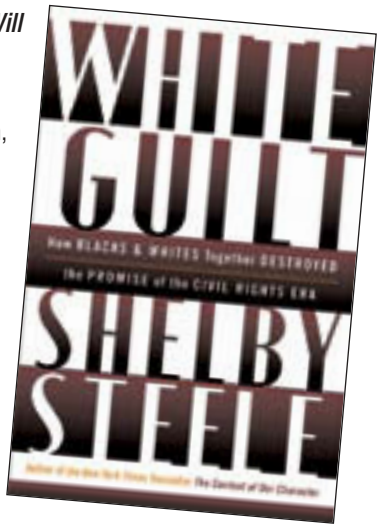
— George F. Will



In 1955 the murderers of Emmett Till, a black Mississippi youth, were acquitted of their crime, undoubtedly because they were white. Forty years later, O. J. Simpson, whom many thought would be found guilty of murder by virtue of the DNA evidence against him, went free after his attorney portrayed him as a victim of racism. Clearly, a sea change has taken place in American culture, but how did it happen? In this important new work, distinguished race relations scholar Shelby Steele argues that the age of white supremacy has given way to an age of white guilt—and neither that has been good for African Americans.

Shelby Steele is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.

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Ricky Silberman, 1937-2007

We were saddened to learn of the death last week of Ricky Silberman, after a long and valiant struggle with cancer. Rosalie Gaull Silberman, Smith '58, was the wife of Judge Laurence Silberman of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, the mother of three, and a lively and charming presence in political Washington for four decades.

But she was much more than a vivid personality and loyal friend. As a Reagan appointee to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the fearless director of its Office of Congressional Compliance, and a member of the Pentagon's Advisory Commission on the Status of Women, Ricky Silberman probably exerted as much influence as anyone in the past quarter-century on the role of women in American society, in the workplace, and the law. As a founder and longtime chairman of the Independent Women's Forum, she was determined to change the terms of debate about women from, as she put it, "the fallacies and hypocrisies of radical political interest group feminism"—and she succeeded, perhaps beyond her expectations.

It was the Supreme Court nomination of her fellow EEOC commissioner Clarence Thomas that pushed her decisively into action. "We were concerned that those who would speak for American women were neither telling the truth about Clarence Thomas nor making sense with respect to issues of crucial importance to American women," she said later. "We listened to the spin of those days—the litany that women are victims and men just don't get it—and decided that those woebegone women did not speak for us, nor did we think that they spoke for the vast majority of American women."

All of us owe a debt of gratitude to Ricky Silberman. And like her family, friends, colleagues, protégés, and the countless beneficiaries of her energy and wisdom, The Scrapbook will miss this beloved and remarkable woman. ♦

The Amoralization of America?

Is the word *immoral* being replaced by the word *amoral* among the whatever-we-do-let's-not-be-judgmental elite? Sure looks that way.

We were reading with interest an excellent review of Götz Aly's book *Hitler's Beneficiaries* in the Feb. 18 *New York Times Book Review* when we came across this passage: Aly's book "argues that nothing more than an unremarkable pursuit of self-interest led most Germans to pledge allegiance to the Nazi regime. Germans wanted their children to have nice Christmas gifts. They wanted to set aside money for retirement. They wanted to send a special someone back home a pretty sweater from Holland or perfumed soap from France. Citizens were sated with decent wages, generous overtime pay and innovative pension plans—that is, through the establishment of a complex, if absolutely amoral, welfare state."

Uh, no. The word wanted in that last line—to describe a welfare state that was based on thieving and murder—is *immoral*.

According to Nexis, *immoral* still outnumbers *amoral* by more than two to one in *Times* pieces (and of course some writers do use the words precisely). But the paper's pages are littered with phrases like "amoral killer," "amoral violence," and "amoral young thief"—many of which should properly be *immoral*. Then there is the claim that it is "amoral to deny people access to health care because they are poor." Au contraire: Every *Times* reader knows by now that our existing health care system is unjust and *immoral*. We rest our case. ♦

Current Trends in Marxism

And you probably thought the World Social Forum still featured tedious discussions of North, South, and the dialectical relations between rich and poor. Not so, reports Alisa Solomon in the March 5 issue of the *Nation*. This year's gathering of global lefties, held in Nairobi, Kenya, was

> the coming-out party for the collective force of African social movements—and quite literally for the Gay and Lesbian Coalition of Kenya. GALCK hosted a tent called the Q-Spot, where hundreds of LGBTI [*I? Beats us. Your guess is as good as* The Scrapbook's.] people gathered daily for incisive panels . . . and for informal group talks, involving straights and gays alike, leaning into discussion circles to hear about safe, hot sex. The Q-Spot buzzed with the same sort of revolutionary energy as the Via Campensina meeting [which ostensibly dealt with "food security and agricultural reform"]: cohorts finding each other and making fast friends and common cause—whether over corn cultivation or condom distribution. ♦

Oh, Kolkata!

Our colleague Jonathan V. Last noted the other day over at the indispensable WorldwideStandard

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blog (*weeklystandard.com*) that the city of Calcutta is no more, at least as far as the U.S. government is concerned. On January 24, the State Department issued a decree: "Effective immediately, the official designation of the U.S. Consulate General Calcutta is changed to U.S. Consulate General Kolkata. This reflects a change of standard name use adopted by the United States Board on Geographic Names." The board's change, in turn, reflects the Bengali pronunciation of the city's name—and hence will fall trippingly from the tongues of the 100,000 or so Bengalis in this country and be incomprehensible for years to come for the other 300 million of us (see Beijing, Peking).

We defer to the wisdom of John Derbyshire, who wrote memorably on the subject of the "onomastic cringe" in these pages some years ago: "The need to call peoples and places by their local names is entirely a figment of the Anglo-Saxon liberal imagination—yet another aspect of the absurd cultural cringing our civilization has gone in for this past 30 years. . . . The beneficiaries of this consideration, however, do not reciprocate. Chinese atlases show England's great university city as *Niujin*, with no hint that we locals actually pronounce it 'Oxford.' And I have no doubt the Hottentots still call my own people what they have always called them—probably 'white devils.'" ♦

Hollywood Perfidy

Shocking news from the Feb. 22 *Los Angeles Times*, which rips aside countless layers of Hollywood hypocrisy with this latest revelation:

"Karen Baldwin, executive producer of the 2005 film *Sahara*, testified that a former top executive at Paramount Pictures deliberately misled [novelist Clive] Cussler by saying that the studio 'loved' his screenplay when it did not."

Are there no depths to which the poo-bahs of the motion picture industry will not stoop? ♦

Obama Messiah Watch

"As you know, I don't do opinions. . . . What some of the pieces we're seeing, that are being written about Barack Obama are saying, they're trying to reach a very lofty theme: That this guy is incongruent. You can't include him with the rest of the argument because what he's got we haven't seen—what he's got died in Dallas, Texas, on a November day in 1963."

—NBC Nightly News anchor Brian Williams "reports" on "Hardball with Chris Matthews," Feb. 22

And Then the Grammar Police Arrested Him for Elicitation

Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley "opened his remarks with a few jokes that solicited laughs from the predominantly African American audience."

—"Walls Against Diversity Must Fall, Officials Say," Washington Post, *Feb. 20*

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Casual

Driver's Ed

I have been instructing my 15-year-old daughter in driving with a standard transmission and, when asked how things are going, can respond truthfully that things are going about as well as can be expected.

Which is to say: She is now capable of shifting into the five forward gears of my 1998 Honda Civic hatchback, of driving in reverse, of parallel parking, and of coming to a complete stop (most of the time) without lifting her left foot from the clutch, thereby abruptly shutting off the engine and launching my forehead into the right-side visor.

The only problem is that if, in the course of these maneuvers, I should make any sort of friendly suggestion—especially with a note of urgency in my voice—I am accused of "yelling" at her. On a few mortifying occasions, my suggestions have even reduced her to tears. Of course, that was never my intention—nor was I "yelling," dammit—but she is persuaded otherwise, and our relationship has suffered a little.

Anyway, during one recent session in a neighborhood church parking lot, it occurred to me that fatherhood has certainly furnished its share of awkward moments over the years. And more than a few of those have taken place in automobiles.

Two, in particular, come to mind. The more excruciating was the experience of driving babysitters home late at night. Fortunately, most of the young girls we engaged to take care of our children lived within easy driving distance of our residence. But no matter how short the excursion, they were among the longest, and most uncomfortable, minutes of my life.

At first, I thought it was the polite thing to do to engage them in conversation, or ask innocuous questions: How is school? What's your favorite course? Do you think it will snow tomorrow? Sometimes I would relate an anecdote from earlier in the evening, or even commiserate with them: "Mrs. Terzian and I were sorry to read about your dad's indictment." Nearly all these approaches were met with something close to embarrassed silence, or a monosyllabic response.

Darren Gygi

Being the self-conscious sort, I was genuinely puzzled, and not a little hurt, by their obvious discomfort and (as I thought) rudeness. So at some point I mentioned the curious case of the stoic babysitters to my wife, who suggested I consider the circumstances from the sitter's perspective. Here she was, in the full flower of adolescence, sitting alone, very late at night, beside a talkative gentleman who might or might not have consumed a cocktail or two, and who might or might not consider himself God's gift to teenage girls.

From that point of view, of course, their silence was comprehensible. They were probably feeling something akin to terror. Which, in turn, was equally painful for me: Any question or comment would have the earmark of an opening gambit. In the fullness of time I solved the problem by turning on the local classical music station and humming contentedly along. Better to be thought an oblivious eccentric than an aging groper.

Now, thankfully, both my children are long past the babysitter phase; but since my daughter is not driving on her own, yet leads a varied and active extracurricular life, I am frequently called upon to serve as chauffeur. I use the word "chauffeur" advisedly, since she often travels in the company of a friend—sometimes two or three friends—and they insist on sitting in the back seat.

Once again, this puts me in something of a dilemma. On the one hand, my daughter is (perhaps understandably) horrified by my attempts at intergenerational conversation—or, worse, humor—and on many occasions, when driving her home alone, I have been gently lectured about the necessity of keeping my mouth shut. But on the other hand I feel slightly silly, and not a little annoyed, to be driving my daughter and her voluble friends while maintaining a mandatory silence behind the steering wheel.

So, to balance the scales, I resort once again to the classical music station. If I am forbidden to interject while listening to their adolescent chatter, then I'll let Beethoven speak for me. Or, better yet, Arnold Schoenberg. My daughter knows the rule about listening to hip hop in my car—*She who plays crunk / Shall sit in the trunk*—but her complaining about string quartets on the radio allows me to respond. Dialogue ensues, and before you know it, her friends are giggling at my diabolical wit.

As easy as downshifting from fifth to fourth gear.

Philip Terzian

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Meet the Looneys

Regarding Matthew Continetti's "The Full Schumer" (Feb. 19): Senator Charles Schumer should not count on his imaginary friends, the "Baileys," to show up at primary elections. It is, rather, their neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Looney, and *their* zealous political friends, all holding views abhorrent to the Baileys, who regularly vote in Democratic primaries. Chuck can check this out with his colleague Joe Lieberman, who is no longer a Democrat thanks to the Looney clan.

Rod Roggensack
Lancaster, Wisc.

My Old School

As a 1948 graduate of Punahou School in Honolulu, Hawaii, I take issue with Andrew Ferguson's characterization of the school that Barack Obama attended as "a fancy prep school in Waikiki" ("The Literary Obama," Feb. 12). The oldest private school west of the Rockies, Punahou was founded in 1841 by Christian missionaries to provide schooling for their children in what was then the Kingdom of Hawaii, an essentially non-English speaking society.

I attended Punahou as one of a contingent of "military brats," children of people serving at various military posts on the island of Oahu, and we were bused in to Honolulu. While it is true that today Punahou prepares students for college, to label it "a fancy prep school" sends a completely false message. By the way, Punahou is not "in Waikiki." It is almost three miles inland in the Manoa Valley. In the years when I attended the school I lived in Pearl Harbor, some seven miles away, and I don't remember ever setting foot on Waikiki beach. Other than these concerns, Ferguson's review was beyond criticism.

Isaac Shapiro
New York, N.Y.

Ignominious Incumbents

William Kristol is exactly right concerning the ignominy of several sup-

posedly Republican senators who appear determined to undermine any chance to win in Iraq ("A Terrible Ignominy," Feb. 12). I, too, hope that a "victory-oriented" challenger will step forward to oppose Warner, Smith, Collins, Snowe, Hagel, and any others who choose to quit the fight. I fear, alas, that I already know what would happen in such a case. The GOP's senatorial campaign committee would dutifully back the incumbent, just as they blithely supported Lincoln Chafee and Arlen Specter. They would once again savagely attack a true conservative, such as Stephen Laffey in Rhode Island.

Bill Brockman
Atlanta, Ga.

Theft of Thoughts

I enjoyed Joseph Bottum's "To Borrow a Phrase" (Feb. 19), an entertaining commentary on the problem of other writers plagiarizing his thoughts before he actually puts them on paper. "So influential are my thoughts and phrasings that a great number are actually *pre-stolen*—taken by other writers before I can even get around to thinking or saying them," he writes. Over a decade ago, Kris Kristofferson recorded Robert Earl Keen's "Corpus Christi Bay," which is a sort of unofficial Texas collegiate anthem. Upon recording Keen's work, Kristofferson remarked that he had intended to write the same song, but Keen had written it before Kris could do the same. Another case of "pre-stolen" plagiarism.

Gregg Geil
Austin, Tex.

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Jimmy Carter, Israel and the Jews

Is our former President ignorant, malevolent – or both?

Jimmy Carter, our 39th president, has just written a book in which he purports to clarify the causes of the unending Israel-Arab conflict. The title of the book shows the bias that permeates it: *Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid*. It is a scurrilous comparison with the oppression of the black majority in South Africa. The entire book is shot through with falsehoods, distortions, and omissions of facts.

What are the facts?

There are so many falsehoods in the book that it isn't easy to know where to begin. But here are just a few of the many distortions in it.

• Yasser Arafat, the "leader" of the Palestinians for decades, was the man responsible for many murders that he had personally authorized. Hafez-al-Assad, the former tyrant of Syria, was also a mass murderer, personally responsible for the killing of at least 25,000 in the Syrian city of Hama. Both are described as leaders who diligently sought peace with Israel. Mr. Carter knows better, of course.

> "It is...not likely that the lies, misstatements, and omissions in his book are the result of ignorance. They must be the result, therefore, of malevolence – ..."

• Mr. Carter asserts that peace would have descended on Israel/Palestine if the Israelis had not "colonized" Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank"). But that is quite incorrect. In the first place, the term "colonization" is not applicable. It presupposes that Judea/Samaria (the "West Bank") is Palestinian territory, which those aggressive Israeli Jews have usurped. Not so, of course! Jews have had a presence in the area since time immemorial and certainly have at least the same rights to live there as the Arabs. It was never "Palestinian" land. So there can't have been any "colonization." Mr. Carter knows that, of course.

• Mr. Carter makes a great to-do about the "apartheid wall that snakes through of what is left of the West Bank." The purpose of this "wall," which is really a fence over most of its course, is to safeguard the Israeli populace from the marauding murder gangs that have terrorized Israel for years and have caused hundreds of victims. The fence has successfully done that. Mr. Carter knows that, of course.

• Mr. Carter focuses on Security Council Resolution No. 242, which calls for return of captured territories in exchange for peace, recognition, and secure boundaries. Nowhere does he mention that Israel accepted the Resolution and has fully complied with it. While not having returned *all* of those territories (the Resolution did not call for that), it has returned all of Gaza and, more important, the vast Sinai, with its strategic passes, its strategic port, its strategic expanse of a huge buffer zone, and the oil fields that Israel had developed. They yield over $1 billion in revenues per year, which would have made Israel independent of petroleum imports for the foreseeable future. And he does not mention that the Arab nations rejected Resolution 242 out of hand and instead issued their famous "three no's:" No peace, no recognition, and no negotiation with Israel. Mr. Carter knows that, of course.

• Mr. Carter blames Israelis for their lack of effort to compose their interminable differences with the Palestinians. But that is an outrageous lie. The Israelis have almost compulsively tried, time and time again, to find a solution to this never-ending problem. All of their efforts have faltered because of the racist and theocratic hatred that the Palestinians and Muslims have against the Jews, a hatred that nothing seems to assuage. One of the last memorable such efforts was in the last year of President Clinton's presidency, when he met with Mr. Arafat and with Ehud Barak, then prime minister of Israel. Mr. Barak declared his willingness to turn over 95% of the "West Bank" and the Arab quarter of Jerusalem to the Palestinians and to financial compensation to the "refugees." He did balk at allowing *all* of those so-called refugees – now miraculously swollen from the original 600,000 to 5 million – to "return" to Israel. It would (as intended) have meant the end of the Jewish state. Mr. Arafat left in a huff and started his second intifada, which has killed and maimed thousands on both sides. Mr. Carter knows that, of course.

• Space does not permit to give more examples of the lies, and omissions in Mr. Carter's malicious book. But there are certainly many, beginning with his not mentioning that in 1947 the United Nations advocated a division of the country into a Jewish and an Arab sector, with Jerusalem being internationalized. The Jews accepted that compromise; the Arabs rejected it and instead invaded Israel with five national armies. He does not mention that the largest contingent of Israelis are Jews expelled or forced to flee from their Arab home countries, where they had been living for centuries. Mr. Carter knows all of that, of course.

Mr. Carter was certainly one of our most ineffective presidents, comparable perhaps to Fillmore, Polk or Harding. But he was probably one of the most intelligent. It is therefore not likely that the lies, misstatements, and omissions in his book are the result of ignorance. They must be the result, therefore, of malevolence – against Israel and against the Jews.

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the weekly Standard

You Go, Geffen!

We know from the philosophers that a true statement is true without regard to the reliability or sagacity of the person who utters it. We have it on good authority that the truth shall set us free. David Geffen spoke truth to Maureen Dowd last week. And he may have triggered a series of events that will set the Democratic party free from its Clinton captivity.

Here is what the Hollywood mogul told the *New York Times* gossip columnist:

> I don't think that another incredibly polarizing figure, no matter how smart she is and no matter how ambitious she is—and God knows, is there anybody more ambitious than Hillary Clinton?—can bring the country together. Obama is inspirational, and he's not from the Bush royal family or the Clinton royal family. . . .
>
> I don't think anybody believes that in the last six years, all of a sudden Bill Clinton has become a different person. . . . I think [Republicans] believe she's the easiest to defeat. . . .
>
> It's not a very big thing to say, "I made a mistake" on the war, and typical of Hillary Clinton that she can't. She's so advised by so many smart advisers who are covering every base . . . that machine is going to be very unpleasant and unattractive. . . .
>
> Marc Rich getting pardoned? An oil-profiteer expatriate who left the country rather than pay taxes or face justice? Yet another time when the Clintons were unwilling to stand for the things that they genuinely believe in. Everybody in politics lies, but they do it with such ease, it's troubling.

There it is, in black and white. Will it set the Democrats free? It could. Hillary Clinton was cruising along, raising big money, triangulating on Iraq, rounding up supporters who felt they had little choice but to sign on. And then Geffen spoke up. Suddenly Democrats all over the country may be thinking to themselves, "Well, what about that? Why exactly *do* we have to be for Hillary anyway? Shouldn't we consider some alternatives?"

Once unleashed, this series of thoughts is subversive. So much of the Hillary Clinton candidacy depends on an aura of inevitability, supported by oodles of money and a fear of retribution if you're not on board. But what if she's not inevitable? And what if the retribution isn't so all-powerful?

That's what is now being tested. Now that it has been raised, the thought that Hillary isn't the ideal nominee might spread. Hence Team Clinton's need to enforce *omertà*. Hillary's attack dog, Howard Wolfson, couldn't even take the time to do some basic fact-checking before rushing out an attack email demanding Obama denounce the remarks of Geffen, "his campaign's finance chair." But Geffen is not and has never been Obama's finance chair. He has no official role in the Obama campaign.

Obama's aides pointed out the falsehood. Obama himself commented, "It's not clear to me why I'd be apologizing for someone else's remark." (Notice he didn't exactly disavow the remarks.) And Obama spokesman Robert Gibbs fired back: "The Clintons had no problem with David Geffen when [he] was raising them $18 million and sleeping at their invitation in the Lincoln bedroom."

Then the next day, Obama convinced a credulous Adam Nagourney of the *New York Times* that he personally hadn't been aware of his aide's statement. After all, he got himself quoted saying on page 1 of the *Times*, "I don't want us to be a party to these kinds of distractions because I want to make sure that we're spending time talking about issues. My preference going forward is that we have to be careful not to slip into playing the game as it customarily is played."

Nicely done. Geffen's comments get repeated in three days' worth of stories—because how can you report about the spat without reporting the remarks that started it?—and Obama gets to rise above the fray. And consider the original response by Gibbs. He went out of his way to respond not to Hillary Clinton, and not to Howard Wolfson, but to "the Clintons": "We aren't going to get in the middle of a disagreement between the Clintons. . . . The Clintons had no problem . . . "

Very nicely done. Is Sen. Clinton not her own person? Are we again getting two for the price of one? Hillary Clinton's popularity soared after the Monica affair, when she achieved a kind of political separation from her husband. That's what made her Senate race possible, and her current presidential candidacy plausible. Relinking her to Bill makes her political life more complicated.

Obama is running an impressive campaign. But if he ultimately falters because voters think him too inexperienced—then the experienced, antiwar-from-the-start, and environmentally prophetic Al Gore is waiting in the wings. It was a bad week for Hillary.

—*William Kristol*

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"Respect Conservatism"

Rudy Giuliani's distinctive brand?

BY ROSS DOUTHAT AND REIHAN SALAM

When Rudolph Giuliani first ran for mayor of New York in 1989, he made a critical mistake. Assuming that he'd be running against the blue-collar, socially conservative Democrat Ed Koch, Giuliani cast himself as a liberal. Playing against his tough-guy image, he spent his first months on the campaign trail talking about the victims of homelessness and AIDS and drug abuse, causes that united elite liberals and poor minority voters while leaving the city's shrinking middle class cold. The prosecutor who brought down mob boss Anthony "Fat Tony" Salerno and Wall Street renegade Ivan Boesky tried to reinvent himself as the original "compassionate conservative," and the ethnic Catholic who had once considered the priesthood flip-flopped on abortion and became an avowed pro-choicer.

Then fate intervened: David Dinkins defeated Koch in the Democratic primary, and Giuliani became, by necessity if not by design, the candidate of the unfashionable middle-class strivers living in the outer boroughs, voters who recognized something of themselves in Giuliani, a self-made Italian-American from Brooklyn. Thus was born the polarizing, hard-charging, and proudly uncompassionate Giuliani who, after losing to Dinkins in 1989, beat him in 1993 and went on to transform New York.

Almost two decades later, though, Giuliani seems at risk of following his 1989 playbook, selling himself as something he's not—this time, a George W. Bush Republican—in the hopes that his celebrity and high favorability ratings will allow him to win the GOP nomination without a fight. Or at least that seems to be the underlying logic of Giuliani's ultra-cautious noncampaign so far. With the exception of a handful of social issues where an explicit flip-flop would look too craven even by today's standards, Giuliani, a *sui generis* figure, is improbably presenting himself as the kind of unremarkable Bush conservative whose domestic agenda starts with tax cuts and ends with "comprehensive" immigration reform.

Which is too bad, because an orthodox, Grover Norquist-approved Republican candidate is precisely what the party doesn't need—and precisely what Giuliani wasn't during his two terms as mayor. His genius wasn't for cutting government ("down to the size where we can drown it in the bathtub," as Norquist famously put it) but rather for reforming it and making it work for the working and middle-class taxpayers who elected him, rather than elite liberals who had run City Hall into the ground. He offered a municipal version of the reformism that governors like Wisconsin's Tommy Thompson (who passed on his welfare czar to Giuliani) and Michigan's John Engler pursued at the state level in the 1990s—a conservatism targeted explicitly to voters who wanted to keep the welfare state in place but didn't want the Democrats to run it.

This was the tradition that George W. Bush, another successful nineties governor, was supposed to revive in his 2000 campaign, after the Gingrich revolutionaries lost their way. But while Bush's instincts were sound, his insistence on "compassion" as the appropriate attitude toward the poor struck exactly the wrong note. It spoke to upper-middle class feelings of noblesse oblige, not to the aspirations of poor Americans with a drive to succeed. As Mickey Kaus argued when the Bush campaign theme was first unveiled in 1999, the language of compassion has an inegalitarian and even condescending edge. Worse, it effaces the all-important distinction between those who deserve public assistance and those who do not.

Giuliani, by contrast, has always been a "respect" conservative. Delivering safe streets to New Yorkers wasn't an act of magnanimity, but rather an obligation. And, as Giuliani made clear, citizens and public servants were expected to fulfill their obligations as well. Anyone who failed to abide by this basic contract, whether a petty thief or a police commander who failed to meet crime-reduction targets, would be held accountable.

As commonplace as this might sound, it's difficult to overstate how dramatic a break it was with the city's reigning political culture. As mayor, Giuliani stood almost alone against the tendency Fred Siegel dubbed "dependent individualism"—the noxious idea that individuals ought to be freed from obligations to family and community through the largesse of a generous welfare system. "Dependent individualism" fueled the rise of a new class of ethnic shakedown artists. Unlike the old patronage machines, which trafficked in corruption yet delivered tangible benefits and served as engines of political assimilation, self-appointed spokesmen for "the Community" like Al Sharpton demanded deference while offering nothing but bluster and veiled threats. Their chants of "no justice, no peace"—that is, threats of civil violence designed to intimidate authority—brought the Dinkins administration to its knees.

Because Sharpton had no respect for public order, Giuliani had no respect for Sharpton and all those who mimicked Sharpton's contemptuous disregard for authority. Instead,

Ross Douthat and Reihan Salam are writing a book on Sam's Club Republicans.

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Reuters / CORBIS / Robert Mecea

Mayor Giuliani with Olympic torch, December 23, 2001

he insisted on subjecting all comers to a single standard, even if it meant taking a political hit. An emblematic moment came in July 1999 when Giuliani, increasingly unpopular over a series of police shootings, faced off on his call-in radio program against Margarita Rosario, the mother of a young man who had been shot and killed by two detectives four years earlier. Rather than accept Rosario's version of events, Giuliani challenged her at every turn, carefully recounting the details of her son's encounter with the police and his long rap sheet. At one point, he bluntly suggested the blame for her son's death might lie with her own poor parenting: "Maybe you should ask yourself some questions about the way he was brought up and the things that happened to him."

It's difficult to imagine a "compassionate conservative" saying anything like this. And such impolitic honesty helps explain why Giuliani spent much of his second term as an unpopular figure—in spite of plunging crime rates and welfare rolls, and New York's economic comeback—before 9/11 transformed him into "America's mayor." Once Giuliani tamed the ungovernable city, he suddenly seemed too tough and hard-edged even for New York.

But after the drift and incompetence of the Bush years, it's easy to see how "respect conservatism" could be presented as a tonic for what ails the country, and as a way for the Giuliani campaign to distinguish its candidate from the incumbent. (One can only imagine how Hizzoner would have reacted to the Abramoff or Enron scandals, or Hurricane Katrina, or the mismanagement of the Iraq war.) A Giuliani domestic agenda that builds on his reputation for tough-minded competence could translate into policies that unite conservatives and independent voters.

On immigration, for instance, a "respect conservatism" might marry Giuliani's avowed support for earned legalization to what Hudson fellow John Fonte has called "civic conservatism," which emphasizes assimilation and civic education and rejects multiculturalism and multilingualism. Instead of Bush-style compassion for new arrivals, civic conservatism would offer them a fair shake—the opportunity to become Americans, but only if they're willing to embrace America's common culture and language.

Moreover, Giuliani could cast any immigration reform as part of a broader effort to reform homeland security, which has become something of a punchline during the Bush years. The national infrastructure—electricity grids, ports, railroads, and highways—presents an inviting target, and the uncertain state of the war on terror makes it likely that many Americans will be looking for a candidate who promises to shore up defenses at home. Giuliani's past makes this a natural campaign issue for him: As a foe of lawbreakers and a tamer of bureaucracies, he's perfectly positioned to make the case for, say, a new push for border security that reduces the threat posed by immigrant gangs, or a reorganization of the Department of Homeland Security to ensure that a Katrina-style debacle never happens again, or a broader plan to shore up infrastructure by strengthening and decentralizing the networks that sustain industrial civilization.

Meanwhile, because "respect conservatism" is premised on treating all people as equals, Giuliani the candidate would be a natural spokesman for a renewed attack on racial preferences, a still potent issue that President Bush abandoned, finding it ill-suited to his "compassion" agenda. But attacking preferences and offering nothing in their place is a narrow strategy that's unlikely to inspire voters, particularly younger voters deeply invested in the dramatic gains made by women and minorities in recent years. By proposing a grand bargain that replaces preferences with either class-based affirmative action or wage subsidies designed to expand the middle class, Giuliani could take the fight to liberalism: Why do you want to *divide* the disadvantaged by race, he could ask, when you can *include* them in a flourishing economy?

Then there's the economy, where Democratic populists have adopted a political rhetoric that poormouths America and paints middle class families as victims. Like President Bush's language of compassion, there's a condescending message behind all this economic fear-mongering, and it offers an opening for a "respect conservative" to acknowledge working-class struggles but emphasize the importance of civic and personal

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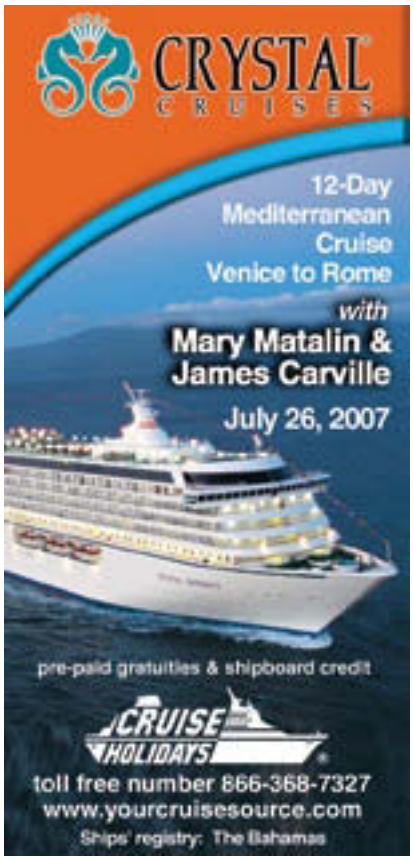
responsibility, both in the boardroom and the bedroom. The Rudy Giuliani who took down Ivan Boesky could be an ideal critic of corporate irresponsibility, for instance, and the mayor who once scolded Margarita Rosario for raising her son to be a criminal might be the right man to take on the relationship between economic insecurity and America's epidemic of fatherlessness.

Such an agenda, not incidentally, would offer a sharp contrast not only with President Bush, but with John McCain, Giuliani's principal rival for the nomination. Where McCain tends to embrace the elite media's pet causes, from campaign finance reform to the patient's bill of rights, a Giuliani "respect conservatism" would be proudly anti-elitist, emphasizing issues that resonate with working and middle class Americans. It would be pitched not to the media, but to the voters who made Rudy mayor—and who might make him president as well. ♦



They'd Rather Switch Than Fight

The predictable move right by Republican presidential candidates. BY FRED BARNES

The sudden embrace of social conservatism by top Republican presidential candidates has been widely misunderstood. It's been portrayed, particularly in the media, as political pandering of the first order—and nothing more. True, there's a large element of pandering when a candidate switches positions on abortion, gay marriage, and other social issues with an eye to gaining votes. But for a Republican seeking his party's nomination, shifting to the right on social issues is hardly shocking. Rather, it's quite normal, it's absolutely necessary, and it's likely to work.

There's a bonus in all this for social conservatives. Switchers on social issues usually stay switched. Ronald Reagan and the elder George Bush did so after becoming pro-lifers. All those Democratic presidential candidates in the 1980s and 1990s who switched sides on abortion from pro-life to pro-choice have stayed put. Tony Perkins, the head of the Family Research Council, says you only get to flip once on social issues. If you switch back, "you're in no man's land," a politician without a political base.

The newly minted social conservative who's made the most drastic move is former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney. He's flipped on abortion, gay rights, and embryonic stem cell research, as Jennifer Rubin detailed in these pages a few weeks back ("Mitt Romney's Conversion," Feb. 5). Senator John McCain of Arizona has changed his view on *Roe* v. *Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision legalizing abortion, from supporting it to favoring its reversal. And Rudy Giuliani, the ex-mayor of New York, has sought to take the edge off his social liberalism, even suggesting he'd nominate Supreme Court justices who might overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*.

It was Democrats with presidential ambitions who transformed the switch on social issues—especially on abortion—into a normal political event. Over the two decades after the *Roe* v. *Wade* ruling, the two parties sorted themselves out on abortion, Republicans emerging as the pro-life party, Democrats the pro-choice party.

More recently, one party has become reliably conservative on the broad range of social issues (Republicans), the other mostly liberal on those issues (Democrats). This, in turn, has forced presidential candidates of both parties to align themselves accordingly. So a stampede of Democrats who sought their party's presidential nomination after 1980 abandoned their opposition to abortion. The list included Bill Clinton, Al Gore, Dick Gephardt, Joe Biden, Dennis Kucinich, Tom Harkin, and Jesse Jackson.

For all those Democrats, switching was necessary, since a pro-lifer has little or no chance of winning the Democratic nomination. It's the same for Republicans, only in their case it's a pro-choice candidate who has the extreme disadvantage. Were Democrats somehow to anoint a pro-lifer as their presidential candidate, that would surely prompt a pro-choice challenger to run as an independent or third party nominee. With Republicans, a pro-choice nominee would spark a pro-life candidacy.

For Democrats, switching is painless. They not only put themselves

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on the side of party activists and liberal interest groups, they get right with elite opinion and the media. For Republicans, it's anything but easy. When they switch and endorse social conservatism, elite opinion is appalled and the press plays up their supposed insincerity.

Both *Newsweek* and liberal columnists have taken umbrage at Romney's move to the right. McCain and Giuliani too have been taken to task in the press. Nothing like this happened when Democrats changed sides. Their switch on abortion was greeted by quiet media acceptance.

"I don't remember any attacks [on Democratic switchers] from the side that benefited from their conversion," says Republican strategist Jeff Bell, coauthor with Princeton professor Robert P. George of the forthcoming book *Social Conservatism*. This is largely true for Republican switchers now. With some exceptions, social conservatives accept their changes as genuine or at least steps in a positive direction.

"I want to give them the benefit of the doubt," says Perkins. Liberals and the press, however, can't see a lurch toward social conservatism as anything but a crass political maneuver. "Conservatives don't see it that way," Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention told *Newsweek*. "They see it as someone who has seen the light." Perkins applies that to Romney, saying he "may have seen the light."

Because Romney's switch is the most sweeping, it's received the most attention and the most press criticism. Romney has explained that a conversation with a Harvard scientist in 2004 led to his changed view of abortion and embryonic stem cell research.

The scientist said, according to Romney, that killing 14-day-old embryos was not a moral issue. This pushed Romney to regard all human life, from conception, as worthy of legal protection.

Just as he'd been publicly pro-choice, Romney had also been a champion of gay rights. He changed after the Massachusetts Supreme Court in 2003 legalized gay marriage in the state. Whatever the motive, Romney's flips have conveniently put him in sync with Republicans nationally.

McCain gets credit from social conservatives for his pro-life voting record in Congress. Now he favors overturning *Roe* v. *Wade*, the opposite of the position he took in 1999. Nonetheless, McCain said last week that it's "a false claim to say I have changed my position." Reversing *Roe* v. *Wade* is consistent with his anti-abortion record, he insisted. On gay marriage, however, social conservatives fault McCain for refusing to back the proposed constitutional amendment that would bar same-sex marriage.

Giuliani has the most difficult task in appealing to social conservatives because he hasn't repudiated his support for legalized abortion and gay unions. But he's tried to soften the

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blow. In an interview with Sean Hannity of Fox News, he said he believes "in a woman's right to choose," but implied that as president he would appoint justices like Antonin Scalia who might overturn that right. "I would appoint judges that interpreted the Constitution rather than invented it," he said.

On marriage, Giuliani said, it "should be between a man and a woman." As New York mayor, he signed domestic partnership legislation and still favors legal recognition of gay unions. "We should be tolerant, fair, open, and we should understand the rights that all people have in our society," he said.

There's one issue on which social conservatives admire Giuliani: his strong opposition to Islamic radicalism and eagerness to lead the fight against it. "The threat of Islam is a moral issue," says Perkins. "That's in the mix with the social issues."

The rush of Republican candidates to social conservatism points up a striking political fact. "It tells me the movement is surprisingly healthy," says Bell. The movement is a somewhat amorphous body that is dominated by religious conservatives. "It's so much a part of the Republican party that people feel the need to come to terms with it," Bell adds. And when presidential candidates do just that, they're likely to be rewarded. ♦

A Tax-Cutting Democrat

Bill Richardson's New Mexico record.

BY JENNIFER RUBIN

In July 2006 the *Wall Street Journal* touted New Mexico's governor Bill Richardson as a man who "embraced tax cutting and benefited politically." The *Journal* quoted Richardson approvingly for advising his party that "we have to be the party of growth and the American dream, not the party of redistribution." Which party is Richardson talking about? The Democrats.

Indeed, the former U.N. ambassador and secretary of energy stands out as the only Democratic presidential candidate who has successfully enacted tax cuts and other pro-growth economic policies. When asked about the importance of tax cuts, Richardson says: "Cutting taxes and creating tax credits can be essential to creating jobs and a strong economy." One of his first measures after he was elected governor in 2002 was to cut New Mexico's top income tax rate from 8.2 percent to 4.9 percent over five years. "This was our way of declaring to the world that New Mexico is open for business," Richardson told the *Journal* in 2005. Echoing what conservatives have been saying for decades, he explained: "After all, businesses move to states where taxes are falling, not rising." At the midpoint of his first term, Richardson earned a "B" rating on the CATO Institute's 2004 Fiscal Report Card on America's Governors. Two years later, CATO explained the rating this way: "His income tax cuts were indeed substantial. The top marginal income tax rate has dropped a remarkable 35 percent as a result of Richardson's actions and is still the largest income tax rate cut in the nation over the past few years."

Richardson seems to relish his tax-cutting image. Reacting to a four-star rating for his pro-growth policies from *Inc.* magazine in October 2006, Richardson boasted in a press release: "New Mexico is a national leader in job growth, we have invested in better schools and improved access to health care and—most importantly for the business community—we have cut taxes year after year." In his 2007 state of the state address, Richardson continued to advertise his tax cutting credentials, declaring that New Mexico was a state "where tax rates go down, while salaries go up." Most recently, at the winter meeting of the Democratic National Committee, Richardson reminded his audience that he "first passed a specific tax credit for creating good paying jobs" and was responsible for a host of other tax cuts and credits that helped "local companies that showed great promise for success and job creation."

As advertised, Richardson's list of pro-growth measures did include a 10-percent tax credit on wages and benefits attached to each new job paying more than $40,000. As a result, high-skilled manufacturing work rose steadily in New Mexico, as did real wages—on average 2.4 percent a year between 2003 and 2006. Albuquerque, with an unemployment rate of just 4.9 percent, won first place on the 2006 *Forbes* Best Places for Business and Careers list.

Despite these accomplishments and his consistent pro-growth rhetoric, some observers paint a slightly less rosy picture of Richardson's economic record. Anti-tax advocates have complained that although Richardson

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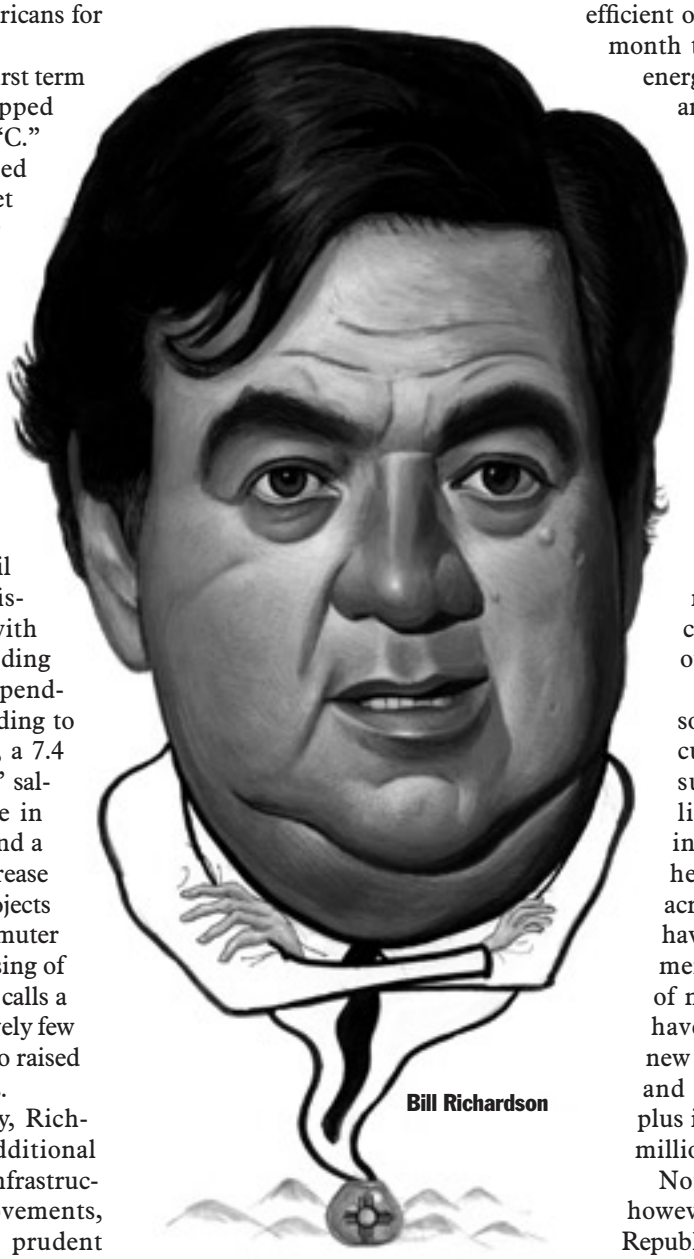
did yeoman's work in cutting rates, he more than made up for these cuts with tax increases on everything from cigarettes to fuel and a complicated, Dickensian, and later repealed surcharge on nursing home beds—all totaling a net tax increase of roughly $174 million through fiscal year 2006, according to the conservative Americans for Tax Reform.

In fact, by the end of his first term in 2006, CATO had dropped Richardson's grade to a "C." CATO's experts commented that Richardson's "budget proposals have grown faster each year, and the general fund budgets he signed into law between fiscal 2004 and 2006 have grown in total by a whopping 23 percent—almost five percentage points faster than population and inflation." Richardson's spending increases averaged 7 percent per year until he appeared to abandon fiscal discipline altogether with a proposed 11 percent spending increase for 2007. Such spending increases include, according to Americans for Tax Reform, a 7.4 percent increase in teachers' salaries, a 9.1 percent increase in other education spending, and a whopping 18.4 percent increase in health care assistance. Projects such as a $400 million commuter rail project, which Paul Gessing of the Rio Grande Foundation calls a "boondoggle" serving relatively few people at great cost, have also raised the ire of fiscal conservatives.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Richardson argues that this additional spending went to needed infrastructure and education improvements, and that he maintained a prudent surplus to prevent future liabilities. Defending his spending levels, Richardson says, "My budget plan reflects my vision for the state: Investing in priorities like quality teachers in the classroom, access to health care, and putting money in the pockets of working families. At the same time, I am proposing a fiscally responsible budget, leaving more than $560 million, or 10 percent of recurring appropriations, in reserve." Americans for Tax Reform president Grover Norquist jokes that Richardson at least deserves "credit" for recognizing what few Democrats do: "Reduce the rates and then spend the money that comes in!"



Bill Richardson

Illustration by Earl Keleny

Has Richardson abandoned his pro-growth and low-tax philosophy in lieu of traditional liberal tax-and-spend policies? His supporters say no and point to a 2007 agenda that includes a new working family tax credit, an acceleration of the income tax rate reductions, and a laundry list of new "targeted" tax cuts such as elimination of state income tax for active duty military personnel, tax cuts for investment management firms, tax credits for high tech investment and energy efficient offices and buildings, a one-month tax holiday for purchase of energy efficient appliances, and an "advanced coal incentive."

Norquist complains that many of these tax cuts "are so directed as to become indistinguishable from subsidies and direct expenditures." To which Richardson responds that these tax cuts, like those in the past, have widespread economic benefit: "In New Mexico, we've used targeted tax cuts to create incentives for businesses to put people to work, to help middle class families, and cut the tax on food, among others."

Richardson seems to have something for everyone: tax cuts for conservatives and substantial spending for liberals. "The policies and initiatives that have worked here in my state can work across the nation," he says. "I have made economic development one of the cornerstones of my administration, and we have created close to 84,000 new jobs, balanced our budget, and we have the largest surplus in our state's history—$500 million."

Not everyone is impressed, however. Pete du Pont, former Republican governor of Delaware, acknowledges that Richardson is "on the right economic growth track." But du Pont adds that "the other essential ingredient to economic prosperity is to restrain the growth of government spending." Of course, for Democrats (and many Republicans), that may be asking too much. ♦

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Africa's New Hegemon

From Cape to Cairo via Beijing

BY JAMES KIRCHICK

Hu Jintao, president of China, has just completed an eight-nation tour of Africa—a visit that comes on the heels of a meeting in Beijing attended by some 40 African heads of state. Both the recent visit and the Beijing summit on China-Africa cooperation in November reflect China's determination to establish itself as the benevolent, non-Western continental hegemon, concerned about the plight of historically impoverished and exploited African lands. Through patient diplomatic, military, and especially economic overtures, a resource-hungry China with an eye on Africa's oil has been extending its reach across the continent.

Thus, wherever he went, Hu doled out gifts: $100 million in grants and "soft loans" to Cameroon, a sports stadium for Zambia, a military hospital for Guinea-Bissau. Many of the grants come with no obvious strings attached. The day before Hu left for Africa, the Chinese Commerce Ministry announced it would write off 33 African countries' debts to China.

Trade is booming. Last year, China's trade with Africa increased 40 percent, having already quadrupled since 2001. It reached $45 billion in the first ten months of 2006. China recently surpassed Britain as the continent's third-largest trading partner, after the United States and France. China—unburdened at home by opposition parties, human rights watchdogs, or a free press—asks no questions about its trading partners' domestic repression. Instead, its "mutual noninterference policy" makes it the ideal partner for despotic African states.

With all of the money China throws at Africa for infrastructure and general economic aid, its more modest military backing for African dictators is the least-noticed aspect of its involvement in the continent. Yet it is also the most unsettling, considering where this assistance has been directed.

China was an early supporter of Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwean African National Union (ZANU) during the struggle against white rule in what was still Rhodesia in the 1970s. Indeed, China helped fuel something of an intra-revolutionary proxy war between ZANU and the Russian-backed Zimbabwean African People's Union (ZAPU). Since Mugabe took control of the country in 1980, China—along with, to its shame, democratic South Africa—has been his leading military supplier.

In December, the Chinese ambassador to Zimbabwe paid a visit to the annual meeting of Mugabe's party, the thuggish organization through which he has ruled the country uninterrupted for 27 years. In 2004, the Zimbabwean government bought $240 million worth of military equipment from China. In May of last year, the Chinese donated $1.5 million worth of machinery to Zimbabwe's military. And last August, Zimbabwe purchased six fighter jets from China. The Chinese have also sent the Zimbabweans riot control gear and have trained senior military officers, both of which must have helped Mugabe last week as he violently suppressed opposition protests outside Harare.

Similarly, the Chinese have exacerbated at every turn what is now the gravest military and humanitarian crisis in Africa, the four-year slaughter in Darfur. At the Beijing summit, Sudanese president Omar Hassan al-Bashir thanked the Chinese government for blocking a U.S.-sponsored resolution in the United Nations Security Council that called for an international peacekeeping force to be deployed in Darfur, where Khartoum has abetted a genocide that has taken hundreds of thousands of lives. And that's not all al-Bashir has to be grateful for: His country's economy is expected to grow by a whopping 13 percent this year thanks in no small part to Chinese trade and infrastructure assistance. "Unless the international community—in particular China, host of the 2008 Olympics—finds the will to confront Khartoum over its intransigence, a savage genocide by attrition will continue indefinitely," Eric Reeves, an American Darfur expert, recently told Reuters.

China also supplies arms to Khartoum in violation of the letter of a U.N. arms embargo and the spirit of countless U.N. resolutions calling on international actors to refrain from inflaming the crisis. The Chinese are unapologetic: In January the Chinese assistant foreign minister said, "With Sudan, we have cooperation in many aspects, including military cooperation. In this, we have nothing to hide."

When Hu visited al-Bashir in Khartoum, all he had to offer the genocidal leader on the subject of Darfur was a polite request that the Sudanese president play a more "constructive role in realizing peace." Just days earlier, a Sudanese government official had accused the United States of "dismantling the Sudanese government from within" and trying to spur "international pressure on Khartoum through human rights institutions and by bringing into the country elements opposed to the government." As long as the Sudanese keep their oil spigots open, they will continue to reap Chinese rewards: During his visit, Hu bestowed on al-Bashir a $13 million interest-free loan to construct a new presidential palace and cancelled $70 million in debt. In return, China receives 60 percent of Sudan's oil out-

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Panapress / Ferhat Momade

Hu Jintao in Mozambique, February 8, 2007

put and is the country's largest foreign investor.

In addition to its military support for the odious regimes in Khartoum and Harare, China sold arms to both Ethiopia and Eritrea during those countries' civil wars and has generally flooded the continent with weaponry, sometimes selling guns both to governments and to the rebel groups who fight them.

According to Herman Cohen, a 38-year State Department veteran who served as ambassador to Senegal and Gambia and, in the first Bush administration, as assistant secretary of state for Africa, China's interest in the continent is nothing new. Since the 1960s, he says, China has been intimately involved in African affairs. It sought to exert influence as a Cold War power by cultivating relations with like-minded Marxist regimes; then in the past decade or so, as it emerged as a potential world power with a ravenous need for raw materials, China came to see Africa more as a land of natural resources to be exploited than as a place to win hearts and minds. Oil, simply put, drives Chinese policy in Africa.

Next to the United States and the nations of the former Soviet Union, China has the most oil-intensive economy in the world. Africa is the source of only about 10 percent of China's oil imports (with Sudan representing 1.7 percent of the total), but that's enough, in absolute terms, to make African suppliers giddy. Domestic oil production is declining faster in China than in the United States, and consumption is increasing at an even higher rate, making the Chinese quest for fossil fuels all the more desperate. China's share of world oil consumption is expected to increase dramatically, from 7 percent to 12 percent, between 2002 and 2025, while the U.S. share is expected to drop from 47 percent to 35 percent over the same period. In just over a decade, China went from being a net exporter of oil to being the world's second largest importer, behind the United States. Indeed, increasing Chinese demand is one of the primary factors driving the price of oil so high.

To meet its energy needs, China has depended on a rogues' gallery of international oil producers. Defying American entreaties to isolate Iran, for example, China in 2004 signed a $70 million oil and gas contract with Tehran. It also buys oil from Sudan and, prior to the coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003, was one of the most vociferous opponents of the U.N. sanctions regime that reduced Saddam Hussein's ability to sell oil on the international market. With the United States now occupying Iraq, China has been forced to look elsewhere for oil, and African states have been all too happy to oblige, waiting in the wings to overtake the volatile Middle East as China's chief supplier. Already Angola is China's third largest oil trading partner, following Iran and Saudi Arabia. (Total Chinese trade with the Saudis grew 30 percent between 2005 and 2006.)

In the United States, domestic pressure has long influenced foreign policy; student protests over Sudanese human rights abuses, for example, played a role in getting the U.S. government to prevent American companies from doing business in Sudan and in forcing American universities to divest themselves of holdings in companies doing business there. By contrast, China, an authoritarian state, suffers no such meddling influences. Indeed, the only condition the Chinese impose on African states in exchange for aid seems to be nonrecognition of Taiwan.

"The Western approach of imposing its values and political system on other countries is not acceptable to China," Wang Hongyi of the China Institute of International Studies told the *New York Times* last year. While the United States and Western lending organizations like the World Bank and IMF tend to make democratization and respect for private property and human rights a factor in their international dealings, China demands no such assurances from its partners. In 2005, an adviser to the Chinese government was blunt in explaining his country's oil trading policies to the *Washington Post*: "No matter if it's rogue's oil or a friend's oil, we don't care. Human rights? We don't care. We care about oil. Whether Iran would have nuclear weapons or not is not our business. America cares, but Iran is not our neighbor. Anyone who helps China with energy is a friend." Should Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez ever decide to cut off all oil sales to the United States (a potentially devastating occurrence, considering that Venezuela is America's fourth largest supplier), his Chinese buyers, he has proudly noted, will help him afford the move.

While the United States sits on its hands, there are positive signs that Africans are beginning to realize the consequences of sucking so hard at the Chinese teat. In Zambia, once a Cold War ally, mine workers have protested the hazardous working environment and low pay at the Chinese-owned

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Chambishi copper mine. Two years ago, 51 workers died at the mine, leading to increased skepticism among Zambians regarding their country's ties to the Asian behemoth. A report released by the British human rights group Christian Aid found that the idea persists in the Zambian popular imagination that "Chinese bosses were uniquely brutal and exploitative, and that the Zambian state's relationship to them was too close."

Chinese influence in Zambia played a major role in that country's September presidential election, when the opposition party made the government's close ties to China a campaign issue, nearly unseating the president. "They are out to colonize Africa economically," the opposition party's general secretary told the *Daily Telegraph*. Late last year, the first Chinese-owned casino opened in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, and the Chinese are currently building a five-star hotel in Livingstone, another major city.

Meanwhile, the Chinese are flooding Africa with cheap goods and cheap labor, to the detriment of African economic development. Cohen says that the Chinese often staff their mines with unpaid prison labor brought from China. Small businessmen across the continent regularly complain about the difficulty they have competing with Chinese who open shops in town centers stocked with cheap Chinese goods. These practices contrast with those of American businesses, which usually send junior executives, not unskilled laborers or shopowners, to Africa to train local people in competitive enterprise and management.

Cohen says that in Kano, a major city in Nigeria's north, a Chinese-owned textile factory has forced all of the city's other textile companies to close, and that the factory's raw materials are purchased in China, not Africa. "They tend to be like old fashioned imperialists," Cohen says. For their part, African leaders "get snookered into thinking they're in solidarity with the third world" by tying their fates so closely to the Chinese. To that extent, China's charm offensive in Africa appears to be working. ♦

Trick or Treat for Feminism

UNICEF's not about children anymore.

BY DOUGLAS A. SYLVA

Two years into Ann Veneman's tenure as head of the U.N. Children's Fund, it is clear that she is following in the footsteps of her predecessor, Carol Bellamy. Bellamy spent a decade reorienting the agency from its core mission—child survival—so that UNICEF could pursue the dual ideologies of children's rights and radical feminism.

Since the United States is UNICEF's largest funder, the selection of the executive director in theory reflects the priorities of the American president. Sure enough, the Clintons gave the children of the world a radical feminist lawyer and former New York politician in the person of Bellamy. When the Bush administration followed with Veneman, she was a former secretary of agriculture with no public record on anything more controversial than genetically modified corn.

Veneman's initial press conference as executive director was watched closely by both left and right, and the right—those seeking to return the agency to the no-nonsense approach that had saved millions of children's lives through massive immunization drives, oral rehydration therapy, and other basic medical interventions in the 1980s—came away hopeful. When asked if she would continue Bellamy's reproductive rights agenda for adolescents, Veneman responded, "I don't believe that these issues are relevant to the mission of UNICEF." She even quoted Mother Teresa.

But whatever her intentions, Veneman has failed to take the agency in a new direction. Its recently released annual report represents the triumph of Bellamy's legacy, so much so that the document isn't even about children. It's about women. The thumbnail account on the UNICEF website says, in its entirety:

> *The State of the World's Children 2007* examines the discrimination and disempowerment women face throughout their lives—and outlines what must be done to eliminate gender discrimination and empower women and girls. It looks at the status of women today, discusses how gender equality will move all the Millennium Development Goals forward, and shows how investment in women's rights will ultimately produce a double dividend: advancing the rights of both women and children.

The authors seem to realize how absurd this is, acknowledging on the very first page of the report: "A logical question that arises from the topic of this report is, 'Why does UNICEF, an organization that advocates for children, monitor women's rights?'"

In what can only be considered her public capitulation, Veneman herself answers the question:

> As these pages will make clear, the day when women and girls have equal opportunities to be educated, to participate in government, to achieve economic self-sufficiency and to be secure from gender violence and discrimination will be the day when the promise of gender equality is fulfilled and UNICEF's mission of a world fit for children can be realized.

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UNICEF and, apparently, Veneman believe that it is now UNICEF's mandate to empower women, since empowered women lead to healthy children, especially girls.

The report is thus a study in the rationalizations necessary to justify replacing UNICEF's mandate with one of women's empowerment, which UNICEF defines as liberation from oppression in the household, in the workplace, and in the political sphere. Many pages are devoted to establishing just how terrible the condition of women is. A sample of what passes for proof: "Along with children, [women] account for 80 per cent of civilian casualties during armed conflict." Never mind that men make up virtually 100 percent of military casualties. "Elderly women may face double discrimination on the basis of both gender and age." Why? "Women tend to live longer than men." Even Mother Nature seems to have it out for women: "In Burkina Faso, for example, where members of the household simultaneously cultivate the same crop on different plots of similar size, evidence shows that, on average, yields are about 18 per cent lower on women's plots compared to men's plots."

Women (and their children) are victims because men are bad. Women want to feed their children, while men do not: "Women prioritize nutrition. Survey results from Cameroon show that income-earning women typically spend 74 per cent of their funds to supplement the family food supply, while men spend only an estimated 22 per cent of their income on food." And women want to treat their children with real medicine, while men do not:

> A study conducted in the Volta region found that men, typically the household decision-makers in rural villages, tend to treat malaria in children with local herbal remedies and generally regard formal medical treatment as a last resort. Women, in contrast, prefer to treat children immediately with antimalarial drugs from formal medical clinics.

On these small studies of obscure village life UNICEF hangs vast generalizations: "Women generally place a higher premium than men on welfare-related goals and are more likely to use their influence and the resources they control to promote the needs of children in particular and of the family in general."

Because women are good and men are bad, UNICEF would like to transform the family. While people may believe "that households function as a unit in which family members pool their time and resources to achieve a common set of goals," UNICEF knows that households are realms of power politics:

ABACA Press / David Miller

Ann Veneman

> Evidence suggests that men and women frequently have very different roles and priorities when it comes to household decision-making. Decisions are often made through a bargaining process in which household members each attempt to use the resources they control for their own priorities.

One way to increase women's power, and thereby improve the lives of women and children, is simply to remove the competition—men. "Research on Latin America has shown that female-headed households may even generate higher earnings, or have more income earners than their male equivalents due to more effective use of household labour." And "Children may benefit from the fact that a female household head has full control over the allocation of household income." And "Children living in female-headed households consume a more diverse diet than those in male-headed households, especially micronutrient and protein-rich foods that provide the necessary nutrients for the growth and mental development of young children."

It's almost as if UNICEF were pushing the single career woman with children as the ideal family type. To support such women, the agency campaigns for universal, state-provided child care, which "increases the probability that mothers will enter the labour force." To make sure that women remain in the workforce, it promotes proper "birth spacing practices," teaching girls how to "delay marriage and childbirth" through "knowledge of sexual and reproductive health."

If only women weren't excluded from politics by men, women could fix the entire world. But, alas, the old boys' network, abettor of vile male habits, turns out to be a global barrier: "Cultural practices that serve to nurture and consolidate bonds of male solidarity within these networks, such as drinking, smoking or golfing, are key stepping stones on the path to political office." And so UNICEF seeks to guarantee the proper outcome of democratic elections—the victory of women; feminist women, that is—by lobbying for affirmative action in politics. "Quotas are a proven method of ensuring women break through the political glass ceiling."

If George W. Bush's handpicked executive director couldn't salvage UNICEF, what chance does it have to be reformed from within? The tragedy here is that children will die because UNICEF—once respected as the U.N. agency most effectively focused on a clearly defined mission—continues to pursue this childish feminist agenda. ♦

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Hasta La Vista, Free Speech

Hugo Chávez consolidates his hold on Venezuela's media. BY BLANQUITA CULLUM

Hugo Chávez

epa / Corbis / Chico Sanchez

Caracas

Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez proclaims he is building a new sort of socialism, a "21st-century" variety. But the socialism emerging in Venezuela resembles all too closely the old-fashioned kind of state-run economy that Eastern Europeans rejected the first chance they got, and that now persists only in decrepit police states like Cuba, Zimbabwe, and North Korea.

As he begins his third—and, if he has his way, by no means last—presidential term, Chávez has announced he is nationalizing Venezuela's telecommunications and electricity companies. A supine parliament has voted Chávez the power to rule by decree for the next 18 months, which means he can nationalize away by just declaring a business or an industry nationalized. And he has wasted no time doing so. His latest target for nationalization—following the imposition of price controls on food—is the country's supermarkets. And once he has control of all food distribution, Chávez has suggested he will move on with what he calls the "socialization of all national production."

Not surprisingly, 21st-century socialism has its critics, and in dealing with them, Chávez is also following a well-worn path. Radio Caracas Television, or RCTV, is Venezuela's oldest private television station and has the largest audience share in the country. In January, Chávez announced that RCTV—the equivalent of, say, NBC in the United States—would cease broadcasting after its license expires on May 27. He accused the station of spreading disinformation and broadcasting programs that violate Venezuela's 2004 media law, which subjects broadcasters to heavy fines or the loss of their licenses for disseminating information "contrary to national security"—a judgment Chávez himself can make. He has also accused RCTV's general manager, Marcel Granier, of involvement in the 2002 coup that briefly removed Chávez from power.

Chávez's decision not to renew RCTV's license was clearly political. Venezuela's Roman Catholic Church and the Organization of American States condemned the move. The Paris-based Reporters Without Borders warned in an open letter to Chávez that the decision would severely limit "editorial pluralism." The New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists said it was alarmed about the decision's "lack of transparency." Jose Miguel Vivanco, the Americas director for Human Rights Watch, told the *Chicago Tribune* that it was "hard to imagine a more obvious case of censorship."

RCTV has maintained its regular lineup of news and entertainment programs—including game shows and soap operas—and has not gone on the offensive against Chávez. It has already survived a 2003 bombing and the arrival of army reservists outside its headquarters carrying machine guns. But time is definitely running out.

The move against RCTV is just one of many that the Chávez government has taken against Venezuela's independent media. The country's 2005 penal code mandates prison sentences for anyone who "offends with his words or in writing or in any other way disrespects the President of the Republic or whoever is fulfilling his duties," who makes comments that "expose another person to contempt or public hatred," or who "causes public panic or anxiety" with reports deemed inaccurate.

In conversations with independent Venezuelan journalists and media owners during a visit to Caracas early

Blanquita Cullum, a radio talk show host, is chairwoman of the Talk Radio First Amendment Committee and a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors, which oversees U.S international broadcasting.

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this year, I was told that the Chávez government is gradually silencing critical media. The government imposes punitive taxes and fines, arbitrarily applies laws and regulations, and brings charges of criminal defamation. The government, they said, delayed renewing licenses for various stations until after last December's presidential election as a way to hold networks "over the precipice" and thereby force them to exercise self-censorship. They said that by refusing to renew the license of RCTV, Chávez is sending a message to all other media that he has the power to do what he wants with Venezuela's radio and TV stations.

Journalists from privately owned independent media do not have access to cover government hearings, I was told. Chávez does not give interviews and will not allow local journalists to attend and cover events at the presidential palace. Only the government's broadcast network, Venezolana de Televisión, has access. The government does not allow other officials to be interviewed. And the government requires independent media to broadcast five hours' worth of programming every week chosen by the Ministry of Communication.

At the same time, Chávez rewards newspapers and stations that favor his policies by placing full-page ads and purchasing airtime. Such government-generated revenue streams are becoming more important for broadcast media, since stations are forced to go to live transmissions of the president's speeches on a whim, usually during prime time. This results in large losses of ad revenues because Chávez's speeches, like those once given by his now-ailing mentor in Havana, can last up to five hours. Every weekend he hosts a lengthy television show called "Halo Presidente"—which is now moving to Thursday night primetime, with radio rebroadcasts Fridays, Mondays, and Wednesdays. Chávez promises to fill the old Sunday television slot with "surprises."

Meanwhile, government and pro-government media continue to churn out propaganda aimed at portraying private media as political actors seeking to destabilize and overthrow the government. Mario Silva García, the engaging, populist-style moderator of VTV's program *La Hojilla* (The Razor), regularly attacks opposition media like RCTV from a set adorned with huge pictures of Chávez, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, and other revolutionaries.

The independent Venezuelan journalists and media owners with whom I met told me they believe that the Chávez government, if left unchecked, will likely eliminate all of the country's independent media over the next five years. But they also said that Chávez is very concerned about his image, manufactured by Venezuela's government and pro-government media, as a democratic leader. This means, they stressed, that international media have a pivotal role to play in focusing attention on Chávez's crippling of Venezuela's independent press. ♦

Michael Ramirez

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The Democrats' Special Forces Fetish

A fatuous promise to "double the size" of our elite military units

By Michael Fumento

It was one bullet point in the plan for the Pelosi Congress's "first 100 hours," two sentences in the Democrats' 31-page "New Direction for America" document released last June: In order to "Defeat terrorists and stop the spread of weapons of mass destruction, we will . . . . *Double the size of our Special Forces*" (emphasis added).

Sounds nifty, doesn't it, like a bumper sticker reading "*Outlaw War Now!*"? And, indeed, top-notch warriors play an invaluable role in any war but are most useful in the sorts of guerrilla actions and antiterrorist activity that will probably dominate the military's missions for the next generation. There are just two problems. First, doubling can only be accomplished by going a disastrous route—making special ops no longer special. Second, false solutions crowd out real ones. Much can be done to improve the quality of our armed forces, but this Democratic proposal doesn't make the grade.

Just as it's disturbing that in 31 pages the Democrats couldn't devote a single line to *how* they plan to achieve their lofty goal, it's unsettling that they can't get their definitions right. "Special Forces," properly speaking, refers to U.S. Army Special Forces, the Green Berets. But, as Drew Hammill in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's office confirmed to me, what the Democrats want to double is the much broader group of "Special Operations Forces"—SOF in military shorthand, or just "special ops."

Further, just as they don't seem to know what special ops are, it's doubtful the concocters of this soundbite know what goes into creating such troops or what a doubling would entail. But in consulting with special ops leaders, trainers, and members—indeed, by merely looking at the numbers—it quickly becomes clear that this "plan" is pie in the sky.

Michael Fumento, an airborne veteran, has been embedded three times in Iraq.

What are Special Operations Forces?

First, a definition—a proper one. Special Operations Forces are defined by how they are trained, not by how they happen to be employed. In the U.S. military, virtually all SOF are three-time volunteers. They volunteer to enter one of the four branches of the armed forces and undergo basic training, followed by advanced training in their military occupational specialty such as the infantry or combat engineers. They volunteer for airborne school, which is usually the second phase of their training, although Navy SEALs actually undergo their Basic Underwater Demolition/SEALs (BUD/S) course before going to jump school. Then they volunteer for the SOF school itself, such as the Army's Special Forces Q Course or Ranger school.

Nor is that the end. Even once the volunteer is officially SOF, with that jaunty green beret or Ranger tab, he cross-trains in other special schools, such as a Special Forces soldier taking an intensive language course or going through HALO (high altitude-low opening) training, in which he learns to jump at very high altitudes using oxygen tanks and then deploy his parachute at the very last second. SOF members also train with special ops troops from other countries. Being SOF means constantly improving your skills.

All special ops are elite, but not all elite soldiers are special ops. For example, all paratroopers are considered elite as well as some non-airborne units like the 10th Mountain Division. But they are not special operations forces; hence they are not part of the Democrats' formula.

As it happens, there is also a more formal definition of special ops—that would be a unit falling under the U.S. Special Operations Command, or SOCOM, which was created in 1987 and is based at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida. Marine Force Recon, which long guarded its independence, was an exception but is now being folded into SOCOM. The Air Force, Army, and

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Time & Life Pictures / Getty Images / Greg Mathieson

Navy SEALs: Attrition rates in training are 70 percent or more.

Navy all have commands under the SOCOM umbrella. The Army command includes Special Forces, Rangers, and five other groups you hear less about. It almost certainly includes Delta Force, but like most things regarding Delta this is officially secret. The Air Force has six units, such as the 720th Special Tactics Group, which includes the men who call in close air support and rescue downed pilots. (Technically there's no such thing as an "Air Commando" anymore, but the term is still used.) Finally, Navy Special Warfare Command includes the famous SEALs (for Sea, Air and Land forces), as well as SEAL Delivery Vehicle Teams, and Special Boat Teams.

By the numbers . . .

A look at the current Special Operations Forces numbers, and efforts already underway to expand them, shows there can be no doubling in any meaningful sense of the word. Current authorization for active SOF is about 43,000 (there are about 10,000 more in Reserve and Guard units). The *Quadrennial Defense Review*, the Pentagon's main planning tool, calls for adding another 13,000 active-duty Special Operations Forces over the next five years. So if the Democrats wish to double the number already budgeted for, it would mean adding 56,000 men; if it doubled the number available today it would still be an additional 43,000. Now keep in mind that a large chunk of those 13,000 to be added came last year from a simple transfer of about 2,500 Marines in Force Recon. Most of the current expansion won't be so easy.

Aside from small (in sheer number terms) increases in Navy and Air Force SOF, almost all of the increase is slated for the Army. The Army's goal is to have 518,000 total soldiers by year's end, though it's authorized to reach 547,000 in 2012. Of current members, about 14 percent are women, leaving 445,000 men. Now subtract the men who are *already* SOF, and you'd need to convert almost 10 percent of what's left into Special Operations Forces.

New SOF will have to be airborne. The current number of men on jump status in our conventional airborne units is about 21,000 with the Ft. Bragg-based 18th Airborne Corps, about 3,000 more with the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Italy, and 3,100 with the recently formed 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry, in Alaska. If somehow you were to get every conventional

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airborne soldier to become SOF you'd still fall dramatically short of the doubling goal.

The SEAL experience

If you like SOF, you love the SEALs. They are the stuff of legend, and I'm proud to be among the few journalists to have been with them in combat in Iraq, thereby allowing me to say with firsthand experience that the legend is deserved. They truly fight like machines. So we want a lot more SEALs, right? Ideally, yes. But Special Operations Command is already "mandated to create two entirely new SEAL Teams by 2010," notes 14-year SEAL veteran Matthew Heidt (who blogs as "Froggy" at *www.blackfive.net*). Attrition in the would-be SEALs' first round of training, the BUD/S course, "is 70 percent or more," according to Heidt, and even to man the two new authorized teams by 2010 "will be difficult . . . unless training standards are radically lowered."

Capt. Larry Bailey, a SEAL for 27 years, vouches for the difficulty of expanding the teams. He's best known for tirelessly exposing men who fraudulently claim to have been SEALs (of which there is a virtual epidemic). But he commanded the BUD/S School at Coronado, Calif., for three years in the 1980s. He was given a mandate to graduate more SEALs without lowering the quality and did so temporarily. Nevertheless, "the Naval Special Warfare Center, which runs BUD/S, has been for years doing everything it can, short of lowering standards, to increase the number of graduates from this most difficult course," he told me. "There are just so many souls that can withstand that stress."

Go to *www.navyseals.com* and click on "training" and you'll wonder that even 30 percent survive. "Doubling the size is impossible," Bailey told me. "But there's something about special ops that appeals more to Democrats than GOP," he added. "There's almost like there's a craving to be accepted by real men. I don't know any liberal Democrat who doesn't like special ops."

Expanding other units will prove more doable because their attrition rates are lower. But few if any Special Operations Forces units could be doubled, much less the overall force. "Doubling SOF is a joke," says Heidt.

Lowering standards

But the joke may not be funny if SOF is doubled by the one means possible—lowering the bar. In a superficial sense, the Army already did this when it instituted the black beret as standard headgear. Berets are completely impractical, but they look cool. The first widespread use of berets in the U.S. military were black ones the Rangers began wearing in the 1950s. Later Special Forces began wearing green ones in imitation of the super-elite British Special Air Service. But conventional Army commanders disapproved, and it took the personal intercession of President Kennedy in 1961 to make the headwear official.

In the 1970s, during the so-called "hollow army" years, the Army allowed local commanders to choose distinctive headgear, including a rainbow of beret colors. Paratroopers started wearing the maroon beret in 1973, while Rangers received approval from the Army chief of staff to keep the black beret. But suddenly the Army reversed itself and forbade berets to everybody except Special Forces and Rangers. Even paratroopers had to go back to green baseball caps before officially regaining their berets in 1980.

That remained the status quo until 2001, when the black beret was made standard Army-wide headgear because, as one writer put it (paraphrasing then-Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki), "the sense of pride that the beret has long represented to the Rangers" could be used "to foster an attitude of excellence among the entire Army." Suddenly all soldiers were issued elite headgear. The Rangers, to remain distinctive, had to change their color to tan. Where once the beret had to be earned, now it was issued to everyone.

When I enlisted in the "hollow army" in 1978, I saw green berets that weren't exactly given away but certainly were unearned by previous and subsequent standards. I attended what's now called the Q Course fresh out of airborne school, enduring the hell and survival periods only to wash out during the compass-and-map navigation section. (Don't laugh; it was truly difficult.) But the word was that the head of the school had been ordered to lower standards to facilitate an expansion of Special Forces. I obviously have no proof of that on a grand scale, but I do know that three other soldiers with whom I had gone through basic and advanced training and jump school passed the course. One deserved the beret; the two others were utter losers.

One politically effective way of lowering standards and raising numbers would be to open SOF training—Ranger School, for instance, to women. There is ample precedent, alas. I remember our jump school instructors saying that women, who had previously been denied airborne slots, had to undergo "exactly the same" rigors as men. But that hardly explained why they trained separately from us, why they had to do far fewer pull-ups, and why we ran in boots while they wore running shoes. The standards were clearly lowered, and the Army clearly lied about it. But, fortunately, precisely because women's training was kept separate, it didn't have the effect of lowering men's training standards.

On the other hand, the Army now frequently has both sexes train together. "Even when they do train together,

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it's not exactly the same," says former Cpt. Steve Maguire, president of the U.S. Army Ranger Association from 2004 until mid-2006. "And when they do make it completely co-ed then the standard has to be lowered, because you don't want a certain group falling out."

Maguire won three Bronze stars in Vietnam before being blinded in both eyes while on patrol in 1969 when a teammate triggered a booby trap. He's now a purchase compliance manager for the federal government. "'Doubling' is one of those throwaway statements with no meaning," he says. "I understand the thinking; it's the practicalities they don't comprehend. A lot of us in and out of service feel we're guardians of the bar. We don't want to see it lowered. You wash out people [from airborne and SOF schools] on purpose because it means you've set some sort of a standard. If people don't wash, it's because you've reduced or eliminated your standards." He also fought the Army-wide adoption of the beret.

"I think in the Rangers they could expand the size of classes," he concedes. "There are currently a limited number of slots to get into Ranger School and that could be raised." He adds, however, "We had people who were cross-eyed to get that Ranger tab and they just couldn't." He also supports keeping women out of Ranger School, not because there might not be a few individuals who could fulfill the requirements but because the great majority would not. "You wouldn't be able to wash them out, because then they'd yell they were just discriminated against," he says.

This is no theoretical assumption on his part. The only green beret ever awarded to a woman came from a judge. According to retired Special Forces officer Lt. Col. William E. Bailey, Cpt. Kathleen Wilder attended all three phases of Special Forces training in the summer of 1980, but during the final week "she and two male students were caught caching their rucksacks. That is, she and her compatriots were not carrying the rucksacks as required by the instructors, but hiding them to pick up at a later time and date in what is referred to as a Mission Support Site. All three were dropped from the course, ostensibly for cheating." The men accepted the outcome, Bailey has written, but Wilder got a lawyer who argued she was a victim of sex discrimination. The court agreed, ordering that she receive a course completion certificate. She never spent a day in an actual Special Forces unit, according to Bailey, but she continues to play off her reputation as "the nation's only female Green Beret."

What about having commanders of elite but non-SOF units identify men who appeared to be capable of graduating from SOF schools and urging them to attend? I certainly saw some men like that in Iraq with the 1/506th of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Maguire's objection: "It would be a brain drain so to speak," he said. "You need those exceptional individuals to buffer the units they're in. Pull them out and put them in SOF and the units they leave behind suffer."

The Army Special Operations Command website lists four "Truths," of which two are: "*Quality* is better than *quantity*" and "Special Operations Forces cannot be mass produced." For a Democratic Congress eager to demonstrate to voters that it knows better how to pursue the nation's defense interests than the GOP, these aren't just truths—they're a warning.

What we can *do*

Yet increasing America's war-fighting ability is hardly a gargantuan, much less hopeless, task. Throughout most of the history of Special Operations Forces, since before Vietnam, SOF units were downplayed by the military brass in favor of huge conventional forces but championed by civilian leaders such as Kennedy. Probably no secretary of defense believed in their usefulness or employed them more effectively and broadly than did Donald Rumsfeld. But the pendulum has swung too far, culminating in the dramatic post-Cold War drawdown of conventional forces. Now Rumsfeld's ideas of a smaller, more agile military of the future, ideas that seemed to ratify that drawdown, have met their nemesis in the sands of Iraq.

At the time of Operation Desert Storm in early 1991, our active armed forces—all volunteers—comprised about 2 million men and women. That now stands at about 1.4 million. Yet during those same years the national population grew by a full 50 million, or 20 percent, and the percentage of women in the military is at its highest ever.

Jim Hetrick, who spent 15 years with Special Forces and three tours in Vietnam and has been president of the Special Operations Association for 15 years, makes the same observation about doubling SOF as everyone else I talked to. "Talking about doubling the numbers is just talking. It's cosmetic." But, he adds, "with the reduction in strength of our Armed Forces, the dilemma becomes the inability to field enough soldiers in any area to do the job."

Getting the active military back to nearly two million personnel shouldn't be a hopeless exercise. Further, the more men we have already under arms the more men who have already taken that first step towards becoming SOF. Grow the military, and part of the fallout will be more elite conventional forces and inevitably more Special Operations Forces.

As to those elite conventional forces, they certainly can also be expanded—though again, nowhere near dou-

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bled. The 82nd currently has 17,000 soldiers (although not quite all are actually jump-qualified). "We're not having trouble filling slots," says the unit's public affairs officer Maj. Tom Earnhardt. "Given the resources [namely funding], if we wanted to, we could stand up another brigade." There are 3,300 soldiers in an 82nd brigade.

To do this, of course, defense spending would need to be finally increased to a level appropriate for a nation at war. On September 11, 2001, the defense budget was 3.1 percent of the GDP. Now, with two shooting wars and a vast number of other commitments, that figure has gone up merely to 3.8 percent. Half a century ago, in 1956, with no shooting wars, it was 9.9 percent of GDP. (At the height of World War II, it was 38 percent.) Yet, astonishingly, defense spending as a percentage of GDP is slated to drop again until it's fallen back to 3.1 percent by 2010.

The fallout goes way beyond manpower recruitment and retention. A December *Washington Post* article observed that "depletion of major equipment such as tanks, Bradley Fighting Vehicles, and especially helicopters and armored Humvees has left many military units in the United States without adequate training gear." Over 500 M1 Abrams tanks and 1,000 Humvees are awaiting repair. Yet repair depots have been operating at about half their capacity because of a lack of funding.

One result is that there aren't nearly enough heavy trucks and maybe not enough armored Humvees to support the current "surge" in manpower into Iraq. "We don't have the [armor] kits, and we don't have the trucks," Lt. Gen. Stephen Speakes, the Army's deputy chief of staff for force, recently told a reporter. He said it would probably be summer before heavy truck requirements are completed. There may or may not be enough armored Humvees for now, but this clearly threatens the sale to Iraq of 400 of them. Most Iraqi forces still drive pickup trucks with a medium machine gun in the bed and at best a sheet of armor riveted to the sides of the bed and the doors.

President Bush has acknowledged some of these problems with a proposed fiscal year 2008 defense budget increase of 11.3 percent or $481.4 billion. Yet an October Congressional Budget Office report indicates that may be far too small, that DoD will require an annual average of about $560 billion through 2024 to pay for ordered weapons and rising operational and personnel costs. So far the Democrats, while promising to do so, have not yet directly challenged defense spending. Let's hope they don't try to use their special ops doubling fantasy as leverage. If they really want to demonstrate how they've become advocates of national defense, they should earmark that extra $80 billion that the CBO report says is required.

Sheer numbers of troops and sophisticated and well-maintained equipment are no substitute for the skills and courage of Special Operations Forces. But neither can SOF substitute for a large army of well-trained and disciplined troops or for top-quality, operative hardware. We obtained our "peace dividend" by gutting the military. We're already paying for serious manpower shortages in both Iraq and Afghanistan with the blood of our servicemen and women. It's time to ante up some money instead. ♦

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Valentine's Day in Saudi Arabia

Portents of change from the desert kingdom

By Stephen Schwartz & Irfan al-Alawi

Close observers of Saudi Arabia detect what may be the first faint signs of movement away from tyranny. King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, who ascended the throne two years ago and is now at least 83, is the apparent instigator of this change. The Saudis are polarizing, some say, between the supporters of King Abdullah and his enemies, the fundamentalist clerics.

Saudi Arabia was founded on a totalitarian ideology, Wahhabism, that claims to be an Islamic religious doctrine, but is really a radical system of social control. Riyadh has long financed Wahhabi global expansionism and adventurism, and this has now come home to roost. Saudi Arabia has entered a crisis, and resembles the former Soviet Union as it was poised to fall apart—a gerontocracy in which neither power nor policy is transparent or, until lately, susceptible to pressure for change from below.

As a result, the interpretation of Saudi politics is a lot like the old craft of Sovietology, in which the seemingly most trivial developments in the Kremlin were subjected to minute examination. But there are differences. Sovietologists were handicapped by their attachment to the global status quo—since Russia was a nuclear power given to provocative and intimidating behavior—and by their own failure to comprehend the internal contradictions of the Communist order. Few saw the brittleness and fragility of the system, and nearly all were taken by surprise when it brusquely imploded.

Saudiology can be as convoluted as Sovietology, but the study of potential change in the desert kingdom offers some advantages absent in the Soviet instance. Belief in the status quo dominated Western thinking about Communist Russia, so nobody in the West theorized about how to dismantle Soviet governance. Not a single book proposing guidelines for a transition from Communist statism was ever published in the West, as far as we can tell; nor have we seen a useful summation of the lessons learned from the various, improvised transitions that occurred across the former Soviet bloc.

By contrast, Saudiologists may already contemplate the end of Wahhabi domination and imagine rational pathways toward normality. Nobody responsible wants the Saudi monarchy to collapse altogether; a violent disintegration would have negative consequences far beyond the oil markets, undermining what stability remains in the Sunni Muslim world. Instead, a plausible scheme would envisage the House of Saud as heads of state along the lines of the British royal family, even keeping a share of oil revenues, but with a written constitution that guarantees an independent judiciary, freedom of the press, religious liberty—and the complete and total disestablishment of Wahhabism.

Saudi Arabia in crisis has resources for a managed transition that were absent in the Soviet case. The large traffic of foreign Muslims to the kingdom for religious pilgrimages every year provides observers and critics with a window into Saudi reality that did not exist in the Soviet empire. And Saudi Arabia has a growing, responsible, entrepreneurial business elite, as well as the largest middle class in the Arab world, pressing up against the absurd restrictions of the Saudi-Wahhabi order.

Against this complicated backdrop, Saudiologists attempt to read the coffee grounds, talking to Saudis at home and abroad, scrutinizing the Saudi media. Are the hairline cracks now appearing in the old Saudi-Wahhabi united front the barely perceptible beginnings of something big? We should hope for nothing less than a smooth and peaceful progression—like those in formerly authoritarian Spain, Taiwan, and Indonesia and formerly Communist Poland, the Czech Republic, and similar countries in the past 30 years—all the way to an open society and political freedom.

Stephen Schwartz is completing a book on Sufism for Doubleday. Irfan al-Alawi is director of the Islamic Heritage Research Foundation in London.

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Valentine's Day is a touchy subject in Saudi Arabia. Introduced by Saudis who had lived in the West, the custom of exchanging romantic gifts became popular, but met with official disapproval. This year, the annual Valentine's Day "debate" began on Monday, February 12. The Riyadh newspaper *al-Jazeera* (unrelated to the television network of the same name, which means "the peninsula") reported in blazing red headlines that the Commission for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, the Wahhabi institution better known as the religious militia or *mutawwa*, would systematically inspect hotels, restaurants, coffeehouses, and gift shops to prevent Muslim couples from giving each other Valentines or other presents. Such items would be confiscated, and those selling them would be subject to prosecution. The *mutawwa* condemned Valentine's Day as a "pagan feast."

Nevertheless, this year's anti-Valentine offensive by the *mutawwa* was less draconian than usual. It included a stipulation: Non-Muslims in the kingdom—as much as 20 percent of the population (up to 6 million people) because of the immense influx of Western technicians and mostly Christian guest workers from east Asia—would not be molested by the *mutawwa* if they celebrated the holiday behind closed doors, although Muslims were cautioned against joining in foreign Valentine's Day events. The *mutawwa* are notorious for bursting into the residences of foreigners to check whether they are consuming liquor, so this Valentine's Day concession to foreigners was more significant than outsiders might think. The privacy of one's home is, after all, foundational to civilized societies.

This Valentine's Day concession to foreigners was more significant than outsiders might think. The privacy of one's home is, after all, foundational to civilized societies.

The next day, on February 13, the *mutawwa* forbade the sale of Valentine roses in the markets and malls. This seems especially perverse to Muslims, since roses have always been symbols of love, beauty, and inspiration in Islamic spirituality. The newspapers *al-Jazeera* and *al-Watan* (The Nation) stated that all red-colored items had been removed from shops.

Yet Saudi subjects report that the *mutawwa* harassment failed. Many ordinary Saudi Muslims favored their beloved with Valentine gifts, which were more popular than ever. The price of red roses shot up, and they were quickly sold out. What makes this significant is that it is one of several signs of waning *mutawwa* power.

On February 12, the same day the main warning against Valentines was issued, King Abdullah told foreign journalists that the issue of Saudi women driving cars—long banned, with the prohibition enforced by the *mutawwa*—is a social rather than a religious issue, to be determined as a matter of state policy instead of theology. If these words are followed up with action, and the matter of women driving is actually removed from clerical control, that will mark a turning point in the history of the kingdom. Indeed, only a day later, Abdullah announced that the King Abdullah Institute for Research and Consultative Studies, a policy think tank never connected to the Wahhabi clerics, will review the functioning of the *mutawwa*. Again, if this announcement proves to be the prelude to action, it can be seen as another incremental step toward normalization.

The most hopeful analysts see the Saudi monarch starting to remove the state from Wahhabism. Rumors have circulated for months that Abdullah wishes to outright abolish the *mutawwa*, a Wahhabi invention (with a parallel in the mullahs' Iran). In Jeddah, the cosmopolitan business center that, with the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, dominates Hejaz, the region stretching along the Red Sea that is the heart of the Islamic world, women now refuse to wear the face covering, or *niqab*, declaring that it was never a Hejazi custom. In a series of incidents since Abdullah assumed power, the women of Jeddah have harassed the *mutawwa* off the city's streets. It is said that Prince Nayef, the sinister Wahhabi minister of the interior who was the first prominent Saudi to blame the atrocities of September 11, 2001, on Israel, has threatened King Abdullah with removal if he attempts to curb the *mutawwa*. But King Abdullah is popular, and such a gambit by Prince Nayef would be extremely risky.

Aside from the crucial issue of the *mutawwa*—and intriguing but isolated developments like the publication in mid-January of a positive volume titled *The Jewish Contribution to World Civilization* by Saudi author Saad al-Bazaie—the most significant issue about which King Abdullah has adopted a new course involves the Sunni terror in neighboring Iraq. Genocidal hatred of Shias is an essential Wahhabi belief. It has been clear since the U.S.-led intervention in Iraq began that the majority of "foreign fighters" serving al Qaeda in Iraq are Saudis. Iraqi Sunnis are hesitant to kill themselves in terror operations, but Saudi fanatics take pride in this. When these murderous Sunni interlopers are terminated, their photographs and biographies typically appear in Saudi media. *Al-Watan* has stated that 2,000 Saudis have died in Iraq since 2003—two thirds the number of American soldiers slain there.

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Reuters / Corbis / Jason Reed

Abdullah with Bush, June 1, 2003

In a recent case, on February 5, for instance, the Wahhabi periodical *al-Sahat* (The Hour) gloated over a Saudi subject, Hudhaiban al-Dosary, who had crossed the Saudi border to blow himself up in a massacre of dozens of Iraqis during the solemn Shia commemoration of Ashura. The atrocity committed by al-Dosary, alias Abu Mehjen, was but one in a series of Ashura horrors perpetrated by foreign Sunni extremists this year.

But while the 24-year-old al-Dosary received fulsome praise from the Wahhabis, even they had to admit his previous life was less than exemplary. Al-Dosary, according to his adulators, was a mere gangster, or, perhaps better, a "gangsta," known for drag-racing and leading vagabond youths around Riyadh to watch his automotive exploits. Wahhabi media commented blandly that "despite our brother's recklessness, he had a good background and good intentions and did not ignore his fellow-Muslims." Showering the homicidal terrorist with blessings, the Wahhabis exulted that he had become bored with street racing and turned to religion, and to gain divine forgiveness had gone north to join the jihad in Iraq. For all the rhetorical trimmings, the truth was obvious: A brainless punk had used religion as a pretext to commit a colossal and heartless crime.

Faced with Saudi complicity in the Iraqi bloodshed, King Abdullah has attempted to put on the brakes. His most recent actions include reestablishment of diplomatic relations with Iraq after a 17-year break and the arrest on February 4 of 10 individuals—9 Saudis and a Moroccan—for collecting funds and seeking to recruit youths for the Sunni terror in Iraq. To be sure, the 10 were arrested only after they had been cautioned four times to desist from their extremist activities. The day before they were detained was especially bloody in Iraq, with hundreds dead.

Furthermore, on January 27, Saudi media had reported that Iraqi prison administrators in Mosul were calling on the Saudi embassy in Syria to take Saudi terror suspects home. Saudis jailed in Iraq claimed that the Baghdad authorities were calling the prisoners' relatives in the kingdom to inform them of their whereabouts. As these events played out, King Abdullah and his circle were disclaiming any support for the Iraqi Sunnis against the Shias in a series of official statements. On February 9, according to the leading daily *al-Hayat* (Life), the imam of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Sheikh Abd al-Rahman al-Sudais, a noted Wahhabi bigot, surprised the population of the kingdom when he delivered a Friday sermon calling for peaceful relations between the two sects. Al-Sudais, never known for moderation, may have resented having to preach such a message, but, at least temporarily, he fell in line with the king. Of late, Abdullah personally has twice declared that Saudi Arabia will not support the Sunnis in Iraq against the Shias, or permit efforts to declare Shias unbelievers, a position twice echoed by foreign minister Saud ul-Faisal.

While Abdullah and Saud are manifestly worried that sectarian violence in Iraq could spill across their borders, the king's attempt to disengage from the Sunni terror in Iraq is immediately significant to Americans and our coalition partners in that it can help save the lives of our military personnel in Iraq.

It should be apparent that King Abdullah's reform path is, at this point, neither clear nor firm. But at the very least, these hints of the Saudi king's desire to dismantle Wahhabi power at home and disengage from Sunni radicalism in Iraq contrast sharply with the provocative behavior of Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. If a serious Valentine Revolution were to develop in the Saudi kingdom, its success would have incalculably beneficial effects in the Muslim world, undermining the appeal of Wahhabism and curbing the cash flow to al Qaeda, contributing to regional stability, and providing a responsible alternative to the demagogy of Ahmadinejad and others. Certainly, it is in the direct moral and practical interest of the United States that Saudi Arabia become a normal and respectable state. ♦

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Bettmann / Corbis

Boris Spassky defeats Bobby Fischer, 1970

The Age of Chess

And the sport of kings, queens, bishops, etc.

BY LAWRENCE KLEPP

Let's begin with aspersions. George Bernard Shaw thought it "a foolish expedient for making idle people believe that they are doing something very clever, when they are only wasting their time." In the Renaissance, Baldassare Castiglione said that being mediocre at it is better than being good, since becoming good takes so much time that you end up mediocre at everything else. For Montaigne, it was "too grave and serious a diversion."

But on the other side are all the eminences who have been pondering their moves for the past 1,600 years. Voltaire and Rousseau. Cervantes and Poe. Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe. Frederick and Peter and Catherine the Greats. Napoleon and Churchill. Newton and Einstein. Lenin and Lennon. Madonna and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Chess exerts a vertiginous fascination. It draws you into its self-enclosed world of infinite possibilities, forking paths, traps, and escapes with its cryptic, uncanny, labyrinthine elegance. The game takes on a metaphysical aura, as if the secrets of the cosmos were hidden among those 64 squares and 32 feudal characters of varying powers. You can see how people get lost in it, or lost outside it.

The Immortal Game
A History of Chess, or How 32 Carved Pieces on a Board Illuminated Our Understanding of War, Art, Science, and the Human Brain
by David Shenk
Doubleday, 352 pp., $26

The two greatest American players, for instance. Paul Morphy, a New Orleans native, dazzled and baffled Europe with his brilliant play in the 1850s, arriving when he was just 20 and thrashing every lofty opponent. But after returning to New Orleans a few years later, he sank into reclusive paranoia "and in his final years," David Shenk writes, "could be found walking the streets of the French Quarter, talking to invisible people." And after the already egomaniacal Brooklyn-born prodigy Bobby Fischer spectacularly broke the Soviet monopoly on the world championship at Reykjavik in 1972, he became increasingly erratic and paranoid, forfeited his title by refusing to defend it, got mixed up with a bizarre religious cult, and, in exile, has recently been making news with his demented anti-American and anti-Semitic rants.

Shenk adds to these stories an impressive list of other chess masters who have become unhinged in the course of their careers. And two outstanding 20th-century literary works

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Corbis / Leonard de Selva

Chess in 13th-century Germany

about the game, Nabokov's novel *The Luzhin Defence* (*The Defense* in its American edition; known by its original title in a 2001 movie adaptation) and Stefan Zweig's story "The Royal Game," are both about the fine line between chess and madness.

Should it come with a surgeon general's warning: "May lead to disorientation, insomnia, hallucination, celibacy"? Does it detach us from reality?

Shenk's basic argument in this beguiling history, which moves more like a knight than a straightforward rook, jumping over material and landing in unexpected places, is just the opposite. The complex structures and strategies of chess are profoundly related to the complexities of human thought and decision-making. It's a good training for life. "For Life is a kind of Chess," as Benjamin Franklin, an avid player, wrote in "The Morals of Chess" (included, along with legendary games, as an appendix to the book). Shenk, a late convert to the game himself, recounts his visits to schools in troubled New York neighborhoods where chess programs have given kids a new sense of purpose and self-discipline.

It emerged around the fifth century as the Indian war game *chaturanga*, which may have evolved out of other board games played along the Silk Road to China. It reappeared in a more recognizable ancestral form in 6th-century Persia, where it was called *chatrang*. By then the 16 pieces on each side of the 64-square board (not yet checkered) were a king, a minister, two elephants, two horses, two *Rukhs* (chariots), and eight foot soldiers.

After the seventh century, chess, *shatranj* in Arabic, became deeply embedded in Islamic culture, which produced the first masters and the first chess treatises and problems. Caliphs and philosophers and merchants and adolescent girls all learned the game. It thus arrived in Spain, and soon caught on across medieval Europe.

Shenk suggests that its captivating power wasn't just a matter of its metaphorical resonance in cultures where war and rigid social hierarchy, reflected in the chessboard battlefield and its ranked pieces, had central roles. The real secret of chess is that, unlike most games, then and now, it leaves no place for chance. The outcome is the result of the moves you (and your opponent) have freely chosen. The game conveyed a subliminal and subversively modern promise of self-determination and scientific knowledge.

In medieval Europe, though, it wasn't taken as seriously as it was in Islamic territory. Nobody studied the game or developed sophisticated strategies. It was played under different rules in different places, including the heresy of throwing dice to determine moves. But by the Renaissance, the wayward European games began to coalesce into chess in its modern, dynamic form. Middle Eastern chess had been a slow, incremental game. The piece known there as the minister and in Europe as the queen, once limited to one-square moves, became the most powerful piece on the board in (not coincidentally) Spain at the time of Queen Isabella.

The Enlightenment, with its flair for combining logic and pleasure, brought together chess and coffee at the Café de la Régence in Paris and other urbane chess cafés. The war-simulating game seemed, despite increasingly fierce and methodical competition in the 18th and 19th centuries, to promote cosmopolitan tolerance and civility. The 20th century—offering, as usual, a depressing contrast—let politics into it, as Nazis and Communists competed for supremacy in grotesque chess propaganda.

Shenk's book is unpretentious, free of technical jargon, and accessible, even to nonplayers, though some serious experience playing helps when you come to his account of successive strategic styles (romantic, scientific, hypermodern) and the interspersed chapters that reproduce the breathtaking gambits and sacrifices of the "Immortal Game" played in London in 1851 by Adolf Anderssen and Lionel Kieseritzky.

In the last chapters, Shenk resembles a time-pressed player racing through an end game. He has too little to say about the history of world championship matches and the innovations and styles of some of the champions. He's attentive to the cultural echoes of the game, spending some time on Marcel Duchamp's balancing act of droll art and serious chess, and Lewis Carroll's chess-themed *Through the Looking-Glass*. But he skips, among much else, the knight's match with Death in Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* and Paolo Maurensig's remarkable novel *The Luneburg Variation* (1993).

Still, his history has an improvisational dexterity that suits its subject, and by putting a number of stunning, historic games on display, it checkmates any lingering ambition you might have in about three moves. ♦

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Out of the Hijab

One woman's problem with Islam.

BY ABIGAIL LAVIN

By now, the past few years of Ayaan Hirsi Ali's life are well known. Here's the abridged version: The Somalian refugee to the Netherlands gained acclaim and notoriety for her outspoken criticisms of Islam, and was elected to the Dutch parliament in 2003. In 2004, she wrote a provocative screenplay called *Submission*, about the status of women in Islamic societies, which she later made into a film with the help of the director Theo van Gogh. In November 2004, two months after *Submission* aired on Dutch television, van Gogh was murdered in broad daylight by a Muslim fundamentalist who pinned to van Gogh's corpse a death threat addressed to Hirsi Ali. Last year she was forced to resign from parliament when it was reported that she had lied on her application for asylum.

Infidel
by Ayaan Hirsi Ali
Free Press, 368 pp., $26

Tumultuous, to say the least. But before she was catapulted into the maelstrom of European debates about multiculturalism, immigration, and secularization, Hirsi Ali was already living a tumultuous life. Now, in *Infidel*, the English translation of her 2006 memoir *Mijn Vrijheid*, we get to know her prior to her days as a public figure, and to learn about the experiences that laid the foundation for her steadfast, even incorrigible, views about Islam.

Everyone is the hero of her own autobiography, and it is prudent to take Hirsi Ali's recollection of events with a measure of skepticism. Even so, the broad strokes of her life are undeniably sensational, and make for engrossing reading. Her father was a leading figure of the Somali Salvation Democratic Front, the rebel group fighting to unseat the dictator Siad Barre. Because of this, Hirsi Ali lived an itinerant childhood, bouncing from Somalia to Saudi Arabia to Ethiopia to Kenya. Her father's presence in her life was spectral; her mother's was stern and often abusive.

Her travels exposed her to many different strains of Islam: the tribalism of 1970s Somalia, Saudi Arabian Sunnism, none of them particularly moderate or forgiving. Honor killings, genital mutilation, and forced marriages were commonplace; Hirsi Ali was herself a victim of the latter two practices. It is easy to see how her upbringing engendered distrust of the teachings of the Prophet.

She writes in economical, measured prose, with a tone that makes it clear that her mission is to elucidate, not apologize. The story of her childhood is populated by colorful characters who highlight the contradictions she sees inherent in Islam. There is the fanatical preacher in Nairobi, Boqol Sawm, who deals in sophistry: "Men and women are equals. But husbands are not obligated to obey their wives, though women must be sexually available to their husbands 'even on the saddle of a camel.'" And ritualistic tedium: "When entering the bathroom to use the toilet, start with the left foot, and when coming out, put the right leg out first."

Returning to Mogadishu for a few months in 1990, 20-year-old Hirsi Ali observed the grip that the Muslim Brotherhood had on her clan. As Somalia descended further into lawlessness, the Brotherhood represented order, reliability, and a unified voice of authority. She briefly dated a Muslim Brotherhood imam named Abshir, whose sexual advances during the holy month of Ramadan underscored the hypocrisy of fundamentalism:

> In hindsight I don't think of Abshir as a creep at all. He was just as trapped in a mental cage as I was. Abshir and I and all the other young people who joined the Muslim Brotherhood movement wanted to live as much as possible like our beloved prophet, but the rules of the last Messenger of Allah were too strict, and their very strictness led us to hypocrisy. At the time, though, I could see only that either Abshir or Islam was thoroughly flawed, and of course I assumed it was Abshir.

Wherever she found herself, in Mecca or Addis Ababa or Nairobi, a pervasive theme of ascetism runs through her youth: As she grew from child to adolescent, suppression of the will to frolic and make mischief morphed into suppression of the will to question. A kernel of self-determination grew, butting up against the reticence expected of her by family, teachers, and peers.

After a childhood spent simmering, Hirsi Ali reached a boiling point that led her to flee to Europe. Arriving in Germany and, later, in the Netherlands, she was astounded to find that police were *helpful* and didn't demand bribes. She was exhilirated to find her values upended—they were never really hers to begin with—and to discover the ascendancy of reason over zeal. As she began to experiment with a more secular way of life—mentally bargaining with Allah for permission to go out in public without a *hijab*, for example—she found that the warmth and respect she received from infidels confirmed her belief that the principles of her upbringing had been unsound. She is not struck by lightning when she associates with "impure" Westerners, not even when she steps into a pub.

Critics have attacked Hirsi Ali's lollipops-and-sunshine view of Western values as overly simplistic. Indeed, while studying government, history, and philosophy at the University of Leiden, she fell madly in love with the ideals of the Enlightenment: reason,

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dpa / Corbis / Liesa Johannssen

Ayaan Hirsi Ali in Berlin, 2005

open debate, and rigorous analysis. But gradually she began to see fissures in the Dutch emphasis on self-determination. Unquestioning acceptance of the rising Muslim "pillar" in Dutch society had nasty consequences: Working as a Dutch-Somali interpreter for Immigration Services, Hirsi Ali came into contact with countless Muslim women whose rape and physical abuse by family members was condoned by Dutch authorities in the name of tolerance and cultural relativism. She found herself exasperated by the stifling of dialogue under the pretense of open-mindedness:

> If Muslim migrants lagged so far behind even other immigrant groups [in terms of crime and employment], then wasn't it possible that one of the reasons could be Islam? Islam influences every aspect of believers' lives. Women are denied their social and economic rights in the name of Islam, and ignorant women bring up ignorant children. Sons brought up watching the mother being beaten will use violence. Why was it racist to ask this question?

There are plenty of critics of various iterations of Islam: Wahhabism, or the violence of al Qaeda and Hezbollah. But Hirsi Ali is one of a few vocal proponents of the idea that the problem with Islam exists from its inception. She argues that to analyze Osama bin Laden and his movement apart from Islam is to "scrutinize a symptom, a little like analyzing Lenin and Stalin without looking at the works of Karl Marx." For Hirsi Ali, it is Islam's injunction to live a life resembling the Prophet's that has created a "static tyranny," placing a cap on intellectual progress and innovation. Criticizing Islam as an inherently violent religion, without conceding that fundamentalism is exacerbated by poverty or bad governance, has earned Hirsi Ali much scorn. There are plenty of Muslims who want to kill her, and many who regard her as traitorous, or self-loathing, or just plain nuts. Reading *Infidel*, it is clear that her contempt for much of Islam stems from a deep-seated compassion for humanity. Still, it is worth wondering whether her inflammatory rhetoric does more to ruffle feathers than to bridge gaps.

She has been called an "Enlightenment fundamentalist," and it is true that many of Hirsi Ali's ideas are immoderate. At their best, they are uncompromisingly committed to human rights. At their worst, they are fatuous, such as her prescription that Muslims "leapfrog the Enlightenment" by reading Western books.

You can take issue with Hirsi Ali's contributions to the debate over Islamic values and practices, but far more important is her unwavering commitment to the debate itself. ♦

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Washington Calling

A good introduction to a great American writer.

BY JEFFREY HART

Washington Irving

Corbis

Four writers, roughly contemporary, can be regarded as founders of an American literature distinctive from political writing: Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810), James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), and Washington Irving (1783-1859). How have they fared in literary estimation? A good way to approach that question would be to consult Edmund Wilson's very useful *Shock of Recognition* (1943), in which well-known authors respond to the writing of others, as, for example, Emerson on Whitman or Henry James on Hawthorne.

The Original Knickerbocker
The Life of Washington Irving
by Andrew Burstein
Basic Books, 420 pp., $27.50

Of these four early American authors, Cooper and Poe evoked responses signaling their importance. D.H. Lawrence, for example, reads Fenimore Cooper in quasi-mythic terms:

> Beyond all this heart-beating stand the figures of Natty and Chingachook: two childless, womanless men, of opposite races. They are the abiding thing. Each of them is alone, and final in his race. And they stand side by side, stark, abstract, beyond emotion, yet eternally together. All the other loves seem frivolous. This is the new great thing. . . . And Natty, what sort of a white man is he? Why, he is a man with a gun. He is a killer, a slayer. Patient and gentle as he is, he is a slayer. Self-effacing, self-forgetting, he is a killer.

Does that make you think of Hemingway and his guns? But Cooper, to matter, must be seen as a myth-maker. In *The Shock of Recognition*, Mark Twain demonstrates that in "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses" (1895) Cooper couldn't *write*. Yes, but he had hold of something profound.

Poe figures prominently in *The Shock of Recognition* as a critic, poet, and writer of fiction: James Russell Lowell, commenting in 1845, Walt Whitman in 1880. Stéphane Mallarmé celebrated him in a sonnet, "The Tomb of Edgar Poe." So, in Wilson's anthology, both Cooper and Poe make the cut. But where is Charles Brockden Brown, the preeminent American novelist before Cooper, and author of such gothic novels as *Ormond* and *Wieland* ?

Where is Washington Irving, with his enormous literary production? His *History of New York*, a combination of history and light satire written by "Diedrich ("died rich") Knickerbocker," also his multiple volumes of *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* that outsold Lord Byron with John Murray Ltd., the publisher Irving shared with Byron in England; his biography of Columbus; the five-volume biography of George Washington that he wrote late in life; his Spanish *Tales of Alhambra*, his mountainous productivity as a man of letters? What has happened to all of that? As Villon asked, "*Mais où sont les neiges d'antan*?"

I myself think the story "Rip Van Winkle" deserves to live. Indeed, I think it has lived; I read it in grade school. Rip Van Winkle with his dog Wolf goes hunting in the woods above the lordly Hudson River. Wearying, he lies down to sleep. He is transported back in time to the days of the old Dutch colonists, finds they resemble figures in an old Flemish painting while bowling on a village green. Van Winkle awakes and finds that he has slept for 20 years, and missed the American Revolution: "Even to this day they [the current Dutch inhabitants of the village] never hear a thunder storm of a summer afternoon about the Kaatskill, but they say Hendrick Hudson and his crew are at their game of nine pins."

I had thought of this story, of all that Irving wrote, and also, possibly, Ichabod Crane and the "headless" horseman in "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." But Andrew Burstein finds that a survey of college-educated men

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and women born after the 1960s shows that only one-third could identify Rip Van Winkle, and these associated him with a television cartoon.

What remains of interest about Washington Irving, and justifies Burstein's very competent biography, is Washington Irving as a man in his own time, beginning with the period after the Revolution and extending into the period of growing division. He died in 1859, the year before Lincoln was elected. At age six, accompanying a family servant to a New York shop, the small boy met the 6'3" George Washington, after whom he had been named. He attended the treason trial of Aaron Burr (who was acquitted), and afterwards had an audience with President Thomas Jefferson. President James Madison and his wife Dolly were hospitable, Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren treated him as a confidant. President John Tyler sent him as envoy to Madrid, and he knew Presidents Millard Fillmore and Franklin Pierce.

Famous in England, France, and Spain, he knew Sir Walter Scott and other prominent writers, and when Charles Dickens visited America, Washington Irving was one of the men he wanted to meet. In person, Dickens disappointed Irving, who found him less than genteel.

In fact, Irving remained a practitioner of the genteel style in his writing, popularized in England by Addison and Steele in their *Spectator* essays (1711-12). The genteel style had social implications: It was the style of a gentleman, a new social construct that provided a meeting space between aristocrat and wealthy commoner. It remained for American writing to make its own Declaration of Independence. That came with the 1855 publication of *Leaves of Grass*, Emerson welcoming the American poet he had called for in his essay "The Poet" (1844). The era when anyone could take seriously something written under the name "Geoffrey Crayon" was long gone. Burstein, however, has valuably provided us Washington Irving in his time. ♦

In a Family Way

An Anglo-Irish tale of generations.

BY EDITH ALSTON

Jon McGregor is an interesting young writer, graceful and sly. Calling his first novel *If Nobody Speaks of Remarkable Things*, he spoke of things remarkable, or remarkably enough, to be nominated for the Man Booker Prize. Now hinting at another kind of writerly uncertainty, he has called his second novel *So Many Ways to Begin*, making himself an easy target for a reviewer, plunging into his story like a race car driver, steering through its intricacies with a sure and steady hand.

So Many Ways to Begin
by Jon McGregor
Bloomsbury, 352 pp., $23.95

A dual gunning of the engines gets this tale under way. It begins with a lyrical prologue, almost old-fashioned in its broad narrative sweep, following a tide of young Irish men and women out of their villages and off their farms, streaming into Dublin for the annual hiring fair. In the negotiations above the cobblestones we meet Mary Friel, headed across the Channel, and in London that same afternoon to take a job as a chambermaid.

Rich in visual detail but lacking in time frame, the account is swift and vivid, as Mary takes up her job in a wealthy household. On the floors between the servants' basement workspace and her attic room her aim is to be neither seen nor heard; but soon she is noticed, while setting the morning fire in the master bedroom, and drawn into the master's bed. Months later, she departs the house pregnant, and without her full wages, to find a hospital and give birth, then disappears.

David Carter is the child of that birth, and a middle-aged man as the story reopens, now firmly set in time and place. Married to an emotionally fragile woman named Eleanor, and the father of a grown daughter, David is already retired from the job that has defined his life, as a curator in a history museum in Coventry, devastated by German bombing in World War II.

And the author's interest, it turns out, is in more than one type of beginning, as he backsteps through David's childhood in an atmosphere of hardy and optimistic survivors settled in the city being reconstituted out of the postwar rubble. Dorothy and Albert Carter are the parents he knows, a young couple when they were drawn there, reaching for a prosperity once beyond their dreams in the promise of new housing and new jobs.

As important as his parents in these years is David's "Auntie" Julia, a resourceful and flamboyantly attractive woman and his mother's best friend during the war years, who is the first to encourage him in his propensity for collecting things, and feeds his appetite for history by introducing him to London's museums.

As David is nearing 22, and on the path to his curatorial career, Julia has begun to show signs of mental unraveling, and during a visit she lets slip the secret hidden for nearly two decades by her and Dorothy. As a hospital nurse during the war, when conditions made it plausible that an abandoned infant could have been her friend's, Julia had passed the child into Dorothy's hands.

In love by this time with Eleanor, the fragile young Scotswoman from Aberdeen, David marries with his sense of identity suddenly and quietly

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upended, but without acknowledging his discovery, and soon finds any thoughts of a quest to understand the nature of his true parentage entangled with Eleanor's unhappy struggle to bury the nature of hers.

At heart, this is the story of a loving marriage intimately observed, with moments of delicately wrought feeling sometimes wrenched in the direction of despair. But in a time span stretching from the deep-rooted tradition of the hiring fair into the aerial immediacy of the Internet age, David's parentage is not a device for soap opera so much as a poignant artifact marking a cultural shift. In the future, few children will reach adulthood as ignorant of their origins as David does.

In maturity, the boyish inclination once manifested in a tin box of childhood treasures still takes on the force of a preternatural survival mode, as if somehow anticipated in his DNA. Still at the center of David's preoccupations are a rock hammer, a nurse's watch fob, ticket stubs, pill bottles, a scarred photograph—the gathered-up items of a lifetime, slowly yielding their clues, not to his birth, at first, so much as to his life in the course of the quest.

Meanwhile, amid all the sensuous details of his charm-filled scenes, McGregor has a crafty way of planting major plot points with a few simple words, clean as a cachepot hiding in plain sight in the clutter of a Victorian room. At the start of his story, when David steps into a kitchen where Eleanor is baking, his tender feelings for her are so palpable amid the moist scent of spices and burnt sugar that it is almost possible to be diverted from the scene's most salient fact: He has returned home alone from the funeral of his wife's mother.

Time and again we glide through such scenes, sensing their full import just off to the edge, beyond our peripheral vision. But at the core of David's regard for Eleanor is something inert, even claustrophobic, so that following them through their marital ups and downs, we eventually lose interest in the ins and outs of their concerns. Eleanor's needs remain smothering without ever finding a voice; David's conscientious turning-away, because of his marriage, from early hopes and dreams, never leads him to surprising or more interesting depths. After a while, until rescue arrives in the form of a website map, he seems merely to have meandered off the main track.

Given so many ways this story might end, McGregor arrives eventually at a satisfying mix of irony and reality, nicely balancing the modest ambitions of his characters against the story's historical reach. In the hands of so appealing a writer, though, it is hard not to wish for the greater distance David might have traveled. ♦

The Master's Voice

How American art drew on Picasso.

BY ROBERT MESSENGER

There has been a steady stream of scholarly museum exhibits exploring the reception and spread of Modern art in recent years. One of the most ambitious, "Modern Art and America: Alfred Stieglitz and His New York Galleries" at the National Gallery of Art in 2001, also set the standard. In room after glorious room, the exhibition traced the dozens of shows that Stieglitz organized in New York, first of the great European Modernists and then of the Americans responding. The show was an aesthetic and scholarly triumph.

Picasso and American Art
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, February 23-May 28
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, June 17-September 9

I thought wistfully of that show while visiting "Picasso and American Art" when it was at the Whitney Museum. This exhibition is more than a failure; it is an insidious attack on the achievements of Modernism. It manages to muddy the fascinating story of Picasso's introduction to the United States, and to do an equally poor job of narrating how American artists reacted to his art—as react they obviously did, pushing New York to replace Paris as the capital of the art world decades before Picasso's death in 1973. Installed in the Whitney's shabby fourth-floor galleries under lighting reminiscent of a high-school biology lab, in a barely coherent order, "Picasso and American Art" was hard even to enjoy as a simple visual treat, despite the inclusion of a fair number of masterpieces. The show was a slog, and all the more recognizably so in comparison with brilliantly hung shows up at the same time at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art.

The latter, of course, is the one associated with Picasso. The Modern has always put Picasso and Matisse at the center of its mission. From its founding in 1929, MoMA exhibited and contextualized the art of the School of Paris and became a second home for the painters who would put Abstract Expressionism at the forefront of post-World War II art—though AbExers *did* picket the museum in 1940 in hopes of getting exhibited sooner. The story of the Whitney is far different. Despite one of the great institutional missions—the cultivation and preservation of American modern art—the museum has floundered its way through 75 years. Though the Whitney has done many fine historical shows on the New York School in recent years, it failed these artists when they were doing their best work.

Robert Messenger is deputy managing editor of the Atlantic Monthly.

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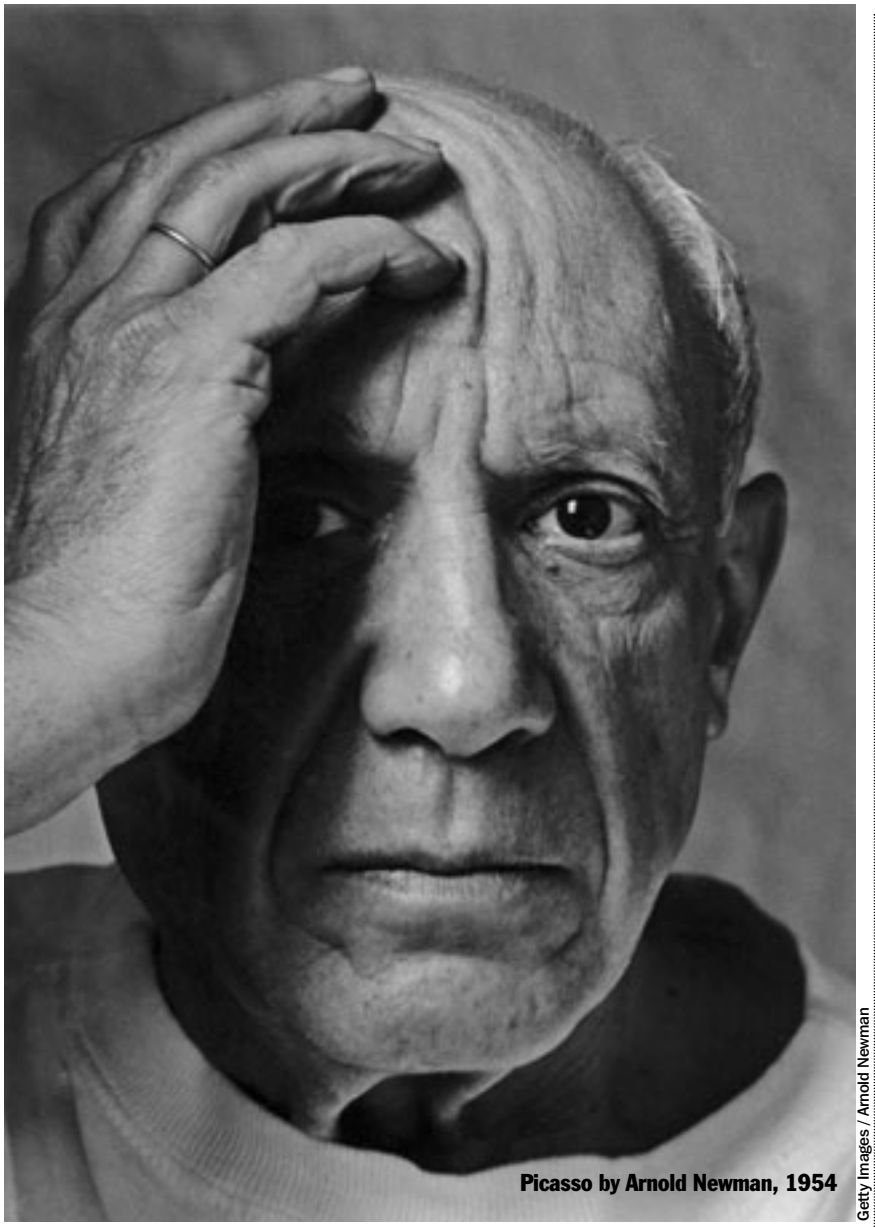

Picasso by Arnold Newman, 1954

Getty Images / Arnold Newman

The Whitney's record with contemporary art is farcical. It preferred Hopper to the early American Modernists, as it later chose Pop Art over Abstract Expressionism, and today favors an anything-is-art approach for its Biennials. The Whitney has consistently chosen to promote the least rigorous art, and it is hard to imagine any artist struggling with the mastering of craft that distinguishes the best art finding any solace in the museum's efforts at contemporaneity. The core of the Whitney Museum's collection—from Edward Hopper to Barbara Kruger—is essentially a refutation of the Modern movement, and "Picasso and American Art" is the mendacious story of Picasso's influence on American artists leading inexorably to Pop Art.

The show begins with the painter Max Weber, who returned in 1909 from a sojourn in bohemian Paris with a grouping of Rousseaus, a tile painted by Matisse, and a small oil still life by Picasso. Weber wasn't the first American to buy a Picasso, but he was the first member of the New York artistic community to do so. He'd made such art's acquaintance, like almost everyone else of his generation, in the Stein salon at 27 rue de Fleurus. There America's would-be collectors and artists discovered post-Impressionism: the Cone sisters and Albert Barnes rubbing elbows with impoverished painters like Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, Patrick Henry Bruce, Marsden Hartley, and all getting a chance to meet the French avant-garde. The Steins—Leo, Gertrude, Michael, and Sarah—were the beginning. Weber helped carry the news back to New York, but his real success was in exhorting Alfred Stieglitz to act upon it. In March 1911, Stieglitz put on the first show of Picasso's art in America at his 291 Gallery. Originally called the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession, it quickly came to be known after its street address, 291 Fifth Avenue, a name it retained even after moving two doors down.

From the beginning, "Picasso and American Art" attempts to have it both ways: trying to display a chronological narrative of Picasso's introduction to New York—which is appropriately a stand-in for the whole American art scene—while also building internal groupings of paintings with similar motifs, showing Americans copying and absorbing Picasso, along the lines of head-to-head match-ups of MoMA's recent "Matisse Picasso" or "Cézanne and Pissarro" shows or the St. Louis Art Museum's 1999 "Max Beckmann and the School of Paris." Having two approaches weakens each strand, and the sheer ambitions doom any chance at clearly presenting any art-historical points. We get clutter instead of a linear story.

There's another weakness inherent in even a semi chronological presentation of Picasso's influence on American art. By 1911, Stieglitz had already presented two solo shows of the work of Henri Matisse at 291, in 1908 and 1910. Picasso was not the beginning of American engagement with Modernism; that came with Cézanne and Rodin. In the years before World War I, he was still just one painter in and amongst the fast-evolving Paris artistic movements. The centrality of Cubism wasn't firmly established until the 1930s, at which time it was clear that Picasso and Matisse were Modernism's titans. In the 1910s, the jury was still out, and 291

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regularly had shows of artists like Brancusi, Rodin, Cézanne, Picabia, Nadelman, Duchamp, as well as African sculpture and children's art. And the American painters being exhibited at 291 were reacting to the whole of the School of Paris.

Alfred Maurer is absent from this show, as he was painting in the style of the Fauves in the years before World War I. Maurer was the Paris guide for so many American artists, the one taking them to meet Leo and Gertrude Stein and reporting on new work to Stieglitz and his colleague Edward Steichen. He didn't really engage with Picasso and Cubism until the 1920s (and in the end was more influenced by the Synthetic Cubism of Gris and Léger than the prewar Analytical Cubism of Picasso and Braque). Picasso was essential to the early American Modernists, but his influence was not in isolation, and the Fauves and Kandinsky and Picabia exerted as much.

"Picasso and American Art" also manages to be a poor presentation of the introduction of Picasso to America. Weber's small still life is there, as is the key work of the 1911 show: "Standing Nude" (1910), which Stieglitz himself bought and eventually bequeathed to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. But little is made of the Thunderbolt that was the 1913 Armory Show, which included five Picasso oils, two drawings, and the Cubist sculpture "Head of Fernande" (1912). Four of the works were on display, but in the cluttered hallway that began the show, interspersed with early works by Weber, Man Ray, Arthur Dove, and Hartley. There is no sense of the overwhelming awe such works inspired.

The first room is dominated at the far end by Picasso's Synthetic Cubism masterpiece, "Three Musicians" (1921); in-between are a strong selection of Cubist Picassos and American responses, including work by Stuart Davis and Charles Sheeler. These are winning pictures, but the whole presentation is hit-or-miss. Picasso's development is not evident, and it is no easier to see how the young Americans are developing—who's been to Europe; who's seen what, where, and when; and who painted what, where, and when in response.

Corbis / Burstein Collection / Barney Burstein

'A Woman in White' (1923)

This ought not to have posed a challenge to the curators. They could have opened with the small, potent grouping of the Armory Show Picassos and then organized sections, decade-by-decade, around a representative masterpiece: the Blue Period with Chicago's "Old Man with Guitar" (1903)—owned originally by John Quinn, the greatest American collector of Picasso—Synthetic Cubism with "Three Musicians," neoclassicism with "Woman in White" (1923), near-abstraction with "The Studio" (1927–28), the overtly sensual Marie-Thérèse pictures with "Girl Before a Mirror" (1932), the violently expressive "Guernica" period with "Charnel House" (1945), the turn to copying Old Masters with one of the "Women of Algiers" (1954–55), and lastly one of the highly sexualized late portraits of Jacqueline Roque.

Blue and Rose Period Picasso is actually absent, though his pre-Cubist work was known to American painters and collected—as was seen at the Met's unmissable "Cézanne to Picasso: Ambroise Vollard, Patron of the Avant-Garde," which had two of Quinn's early Picassos: "Old Man with Guitar" and the exceptional Rose Period "La Toilette" (1906). Leaving out the "Charnel House" is particularly disastrous as it was heavily studied by New York artists and critics trying to come to terms with "Guernica." (This is not something for which the curators can be blamed; MoMA loaned the picture to the large "Picasso: Tradition and Avant-Garde" show at the Prado.)

The other notable omission is MoMA's "Guitar" (1912), which,

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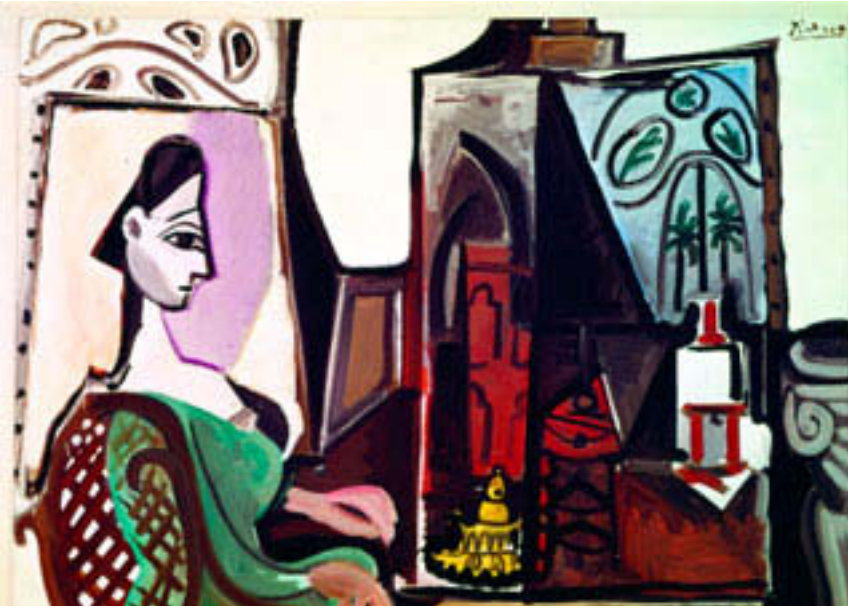

Art Resource

'The Studio' (1956)

despite the date, ought to have been one of the show's closing works. It was Picasso's first constructed sculpture, and he gave it to MoMA in 1971, just two years before his death. The museum had finally been able to organize a show of Picasso's sculpture in 1967 and the revelation of the exhibit was the constructed works of the prewar period and the late 1920s and early '30s. These had never been exhibited but had profoundly influenced 20th-century sculpture through reproductions.

MoMA loaned many pictures to the show, including "Girl Before a Mirror" and "The Studio." The latter came into MoMA's collection in 1935 and was an obsession for artists like Arshile Gorky, Stuart Davis, and Willem de Kooning. It gave them an indication of the vocabulary of what would become Abstract Expressionism. A wonderful show could be put together around this sole picture and its influence on American painters. Some fine works have been clustered to indicate how Gorky and de Kooning, in particular, reacted to "The Studio" and "Woman in White," but in neither case does it resolve into understanding. Drawings are needed that show a younger artist fussing with his own inabilities. There also needs to be some sense of the before and after that shows an artist developing, being influenced. Gorky's debt to Picasso was obvious at Gagosian's 2002 "Arshile Gorky: Portraits" show, which included drawings where Gorky painstakingly laid out grids to copy Picasso's draughtmanship.

Up until the war, "Picasso and American Art" might have been cluttered, but it had a lot going on: major Picassos and the growing confidence of the American responses. Abstract Expressionism was the full flowering of that response, a huge and varied movement. It was jammed in at the Whitney, and because the AbExers were responding to "Fifty Years of His Art"—the title of the then-ubiquitous Picasso catalogue by MoMA's Alfred Barr—there is little to grasp onto. Abstract Expressionism comes through as a way station on the rapid road to Pop Art.

Picasso and the School of Paris were the last century's major artistic challenge, and the New York School was the most skilled and most potent response. Picasso himself had only cold words for Abstract Expressionism—at least as reported by Françoise Gilot in her *Life with Picasso*—but, love them or hate them, David Smith, Jackson Pollock, Clyfford Still, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, and Helen Frankenthaler were gifted artists working through the lessons of the Parisian avant-garde. They produced gorgeous work and were, even at their most abstract, in the great tradition of Western art stretching back to Giotto and the Sienese school.

Pop Art was not an extension of this; it was a mockery of it. Artists like Claes Oldenburg, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, and Andy Warhol used Picasso to crack jokes. It is the antithesis of all that came before, and any claim of descent from Jarry or Dada is undone by the fact that Pop Art was not a short-lived phenomenon—a corrective to the high seriousness of AbEx—but a juvenile joke told over and over again until it became accepted as an intellectual statement. To museums that specialize in contemporary art, the progression from School of Paris to AbEx to Pop to Minimalism to Postmodernism is written in stone. With so much money invested, this show has to believe that Pop was the outcome of Picasso.

Thousands of artists continue to engage with Picasso and Matisse, to learn from early American Modernists and the three generations of the New York School. To cite just one that pops into my mind: In 2003, Paul Resika showed 10 new paintings at the Salander-O'Reilly Galleries in New York. The works were a profound engagement with Matisse and part of a lifelong attempt to understand and build upon the vocabulary Matisse had wrought. The impact was heightened as the paintings, in a group, seemed in conversation, each a different facet of an experiment in Matissean color and line.

It was an enthralling exhibition and showed that, even a century on, the lessons of Modernism are still being sought and interpreted, critiqued and absorbed. Resika is nearing 80 and his vibrant, beautiful work would be recognizable to Picasso as art. Picasso struggled with Velázquez and Cézanne to paint well; Resika and all serious artists must struggle with Picasso and Matisse as well. They've been doing it for years. Despite the celebration of the nihilist art of Johns and Lichtenstein in "Picasso and American Art," the Modernist experiment is alive and well. ♦

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Hanssen's Disease

Will we ever know why he betrayed his country?

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Breach, the excessively sober new movie about the FBI's efforts to bring down the most damaging spy in American history, makes the same mistake about Robert Hanssen that so many of his colleagues at the FBI did over the course of his 25-year career. It takes Hanssen at face value.

Breach
Directed by Billy Ray

Breach is set in the months before Attorney General John Ashcroft announced Hanssen's arrest in February 2001. A young FBI counterintelligence officer named Eric O'Neill (the very dull Ryan Phillippe) is told the bureau wants to build a case against computer expert Hanssen for his sexual deviancy, and he is assigned to work as Hanssen's assistant during the day and write a report on Hanssen's activities at night.

O'Neill instantly learns that Hanssen is a rude, ugly-tempered man whose dislike and distrust of his young charge are only leavened when he learns O'Neill is a fellow computer aficionado and a fellow Catholic. (Chris Cooper, who plays Hanssen, gives a performance that mostly seems confined to his pursed, quivering lips.) Hanssen speaks bitterly about the bureau and its shortcomings, and O'Neill begins to get the sense that he has been recruited to run this maverick out of town for no good reason. At this point, O'Neill's superiors let him in on the truth: Hanssen has betrayed innumerable secrets to the Soviets and the Russians and sent at least three American agents in Moscow to their deaths.

The Eric O'Neill we see in *Breach* suffers a terrible crisis of conscience as he works to bring Hanssen down. His double act threatens his marriage and his emotional equilibrium. We see O'Neill enjoying a pleasant Sunday with Hanssen and his family, which makes him feel bad about busting the guy. We see the investigation take a terrible toll on O'Neill's marriage, as his comely wife yells at him about the lying and deceit he is inflicting on her.

This plot—the dilemma of the undercover officer who must betray the people with whom he has become intimate and who puts his family at risk—is very familiar movie territory. But it's a ludicrous stretch in this case. For one thing, in interviews, the real-life Eric O'Neill evinces absolutely no sense of torment or misgiving about his role in Hanssen's downfall, which was clearly a very exciting and rewarding time in his life—as indeed it should have been.

For another, the timeline of *Breach* makes the O'Neill personal crisis seem ridiculous. In movies like *Donnie Brasco* and *The Departed*, the undercover guys literally spend years with the bad guys and grow fond of them. In *Breach*, O'Neill spends exactly *two months* with Hanssen. And since Hanssen is an almost unmitigatedly awful person, even when he's trying to be pleasant, it's hard to buy into O'Neill's deep conflict. Whenever Hanssen starts insulting O'Neill, which is often, you want the kid to take out a bureau-issued gun and shoot his boss between the eyes—not because he's a spy, but because he's such a colossal jerk.

Breach makes an implicit correlation between Hanssen's unpleasant severity and the rigorous Catholic doctrine to which he subscribes. Director Billy Ray shows us Hanssen praying the rosary and weeping during confession. His last words to Eric O'Neill are "pray for me." He says he disapproves of women in pants and insults Hillary Clinton. (In real life, Hanssen actually spoke on background to reporters in snarling terms about an infestation of "lesbians" inside the Justice Department.)

Hanssen comes across as a standard-issue Hollywood cliché: the right-wing kook villain who is capable of anything because he's so intolerant and insensitive and conservative. It never seems to have occurred to Ray and his co-screenwriters Adam Mazer and William Rotko that *everything* Hanssen said and did, including his professed Opus Dei Catholicism, was a consciously designed smokescreen—a "legend," in spy parlance—that kept him hidden in plain sight for 25 years. Hanssen laid it on so thick in part, it seems, because the more he seemed like a walking cliché the more people bought into it.

Following his arrest in 2001, Hanssen told the FBI that he was "addicted" to espionage, which indicates he took a deep sensual pleasure in the act of betraying his country. The same was clearly true of his surreptitious sexual habits, which included making videotapes of rough sex between him and his wife that he then shared with at least one close friend. He was a sociopathic, wild animal who dressed himself up every day in a stuffed shirt to avoid detection.

In *Breach*, we get a lot of the stuffed shirt and none of the wild animal. Which is fitting, actually, because as a moviegoing experience, *Breach* is as tightly wound and inflexible as the Robert Hanssen it depicts—a Robert Hanssen who, six years after his arrest, continues to work a successful con on people all too willing to believe that his cover story is the real thing. ♦

John Podhoretz, a columnist for the New York Post, *is* THE WEEKLY STANDARD*'s movie critic.*

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"It is actually somewhat surprising that African American women continue to have a high body image even though the standards of the dominant cultural forces point toward more European standards. The ultimate blond-haired, blue-eyed, 5-10, thin white woman has for many years been the standard off of which all other beauty was based, judged and validated," according to a report released by Vanderbilt University's psychology department. **—The Washington Post, *February 21***

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Date: March 2, 2007

NEWS From the Vanderbilt Department of Psychology

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cheerleaders Do Not Necessarily Have More Fun

In a study conducted at three Nashville-area high schools over a period of nine weeks, it has been determined that, contrary to popular stereotype, active members of varsity cheer squads are not always the best-looking girls in their class, nor are they invariably popular with fellow students, nor are they likely to be dating the quarterback.

In fact, says Margaret B. Osgood-Zink, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Psychology, and Head of the Parton Center for Post-Pubescent Cognitive Studies at Vanderbilt's Department of Psychology, "most varsity quarterbacks whom we interviewed stated that they did not date members of the cheer squad as a matter of course because cheerleaders, by and large, tend to be in different 'cliques' from athletes during the after-school hours."

Not only is this contrary to normative trends in the popular culture, explains Dr. Osgood-Zink, "but our data paint a picture of female varsity cheerleaders with strikingly variable attributes." Nearly one-fourth are brunette, and not blonde; 31 percent are taking Algebra II in ninth grade; and fully half report that they sit with nonmembers of the cheer squad in the cafeteria during lunchtime.

Adds Dr. Osgood-Zink, "Not only does this groundbreaking interpretation paint a significantly more nuanced portrait of varsity cheerleaders in this country, it calls into question the repressive standards imposed by our

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